

Ozimić Nebojša
KRATKA ISTORIJA NIŠA

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NKC, 2104.

ANTIČKO DOBA

Rečne doline Nišave i Južne Morave, reka koje teku kroz plodne kotline, još u praistoriji su pružale mnoge pogodnosti za naseljavanje prostora na kome će kasnije biti osnovan Niš. Nalazi iz starijeg kamenog doba (paleolita) pronađeni su u okolini Svrljiga, dok su se tragovi mlađeg (neolita) najviše zadržali kroz dve grupe – starčevačku i vinčansku. Obe su datovane u centralnom jezgru Niša i okolnih naselja. Naročito su mnogobrojni nalazi iz bubanjsko-humske grupe koja se razvila na prelazu iz neolita u metalno doba.

Može se reći da su Dardanci najstariji narod koji je u izvorima obeležen na prostoru na kome će se kasnije u istorijsko doba razvijati Naissus. U složenoj etničkoj slici predrimskog stanovništva, na ovim prostorima ističu se starosedeoči ilirskog, tračkog i keltskog porekla. Sama etimologija imena grada nije ni danas sa sigurnošću poznata, tako da je danas opšteprihvaćeno tumačenje da je Naissus ime keltskog porekla sa osnovnim značenjem „vilina reka“.

Rimske legije su počele da naseljavaju ove prostore u vreme Dardanskog rata (75–73. p. n. e.). Rimski vojni logor Nais, današnji Niš, koji je osnovan početkom 2. stoleća najpre kao rimsko utvrđenje, a znatno kasnije, do druge polovine 2. stoleća, dugo je bio prolazna stanica u kojoj su se rimske legije odmarale pred polazak u boj sa Dardancima ili nakon njega. Zbog prisustva velikog broja pripadnika različitih plemena, kasnije će se Naissus ili Nissa u izvorima sretati kao „dardanski“, „trački“ ili „ilirski“ grad. U njemu su podizani žrtvenici rimskim (Jupiter, Junona, Liber i Libera, Herkul), grčkim (Omphale), orijentalnim (Mitra), ali i domaćim, tračkim i ilirskim božanstvima (Trački konjanik, Mundrytus).

Na samom početku 3. stoleća Nais je dostigao visok stepen u svom razvoju sa brojnim stanovništvom, jakom privredom i poljoprivredom. U ovom periodu Nais postaje značajan vojni, ekonomski i politički centar u provinciji Gornja Mezija. Do ovakvog naglog razvoja budućeg grada dolazi upravo zbog idealnog strateškog položaja grada. Putevi koji prolaze kroz Nais povezivali su tada, baš kao i danas, potpuno suprotne krajeve ovog dela Balkanskog poluostrva – Niš i Sofiju, Beograd i Solun, Kostolac i Lješ. Osnove Tvrdave, podignute najverovatnije sredinom 2. stoleća, kada je Nais bio samo vojnički logor, izgrađeni mostovi preko Nišave, kao i brojni arheološki nalazi daju nam tek orijentacioni uvid u stepen razvijenosti grada u 3. stoleću.

Desetak godina pre Konstantinovog rođenja, 269. godine, kod Niša je odneo pobedu Klaudije II koji je rodom bio iz ovih krajeva. Zahvaljujući odličnom poznavanju terena, uspeo je da pobedi skupinu od oko 50000 neprijateljskih vojnika, među kojima je najviše bilo Gota. Otuda je ovaj vojskovođa dobio počasni nadimak Gotski. Značajno je da je Konstantin Veliki naveo Klaudija II Gotskog kao svog najslavnijeg pretka.

U Nišu je oko 280. godine rođen Flavije Konstantin, poznatiji kao Konstantin Veliki, jedan od dvojice potpisnika Milanskog edikta kojim su prestali progoni hrišćana i osnivač Istočnog Rimskog carstva sa centrom u Konstantinopolju. U vreme Konstantinove vladavine Niš je imao između 10000 i 20000 stanovnika predstavljao je jak političko-ekonomski i verski centar ovog dela Balkanskog poluostrva.

Kao zasebna celina antičkog Niša izdvajalo se naselje sa vilama – Medijana, današnji arheološki park, koje se nalazilo na sredini puta od Niša ka Niškoj Banji na površini od oko 40 hektara. Podizanje vila na Medijani započelo je krajem 3. stoleća, dok je najveći broj izgrađen u 4. stoleću kada Medijana postaje carsko odmorište. U njoj su boravili Konstantinov sin Konstancije II pred kim je uzurpator Vetranion 350. položio insignije nakon neuspelog pokušaja preuzimanja vlasti. Julijan i Valentijan, naslednici Konstancija II na prestolu, boravili su u Naisu 361, odnosno 364. godine.

Na Medijani je, najverovatnije, potpisano više carskih ukaza između 314. (dok je ovim prostorima vladao Likinije) i 364. godine. Oni svedoče o čestim boravcima Konstantina i njegovih naslednika u Naisu. Posete Konstantina I Naisu zabeležene su 319, 329. i 334. godine. U Zakoniku cara Teodosija postoje dva edikta koja su promovisana u Naisu. Prvi su objavili Konstantinovi sinovi, Konstancije i Konstans, 19. januara 340, a drugi sam Konstans, 2. februara 340. godine. Iz Likinijevog perioda 314–324. treba imati na umu da je u Naisu, tokom čitavog 4. stoleća, posvedočeno kontinuirano prisustvo visokih državnih činovnika.

Ovde je postojala fabrika za izradu vojne opreme, a uporedo sa njom funkcionisala je radionica za izradu predmeta od plemenitih metala. Srebrni tanjiri iz ove radionice nose oficijelnu poruku: 317. kovani su povodom desetogodišnjice Likinijeve vladavine i nose natpise *Likinije, imperatore, da uvek pobeđuješ*; 321–322. u čast desetogodišnjice Konstantinovih sinova, Krispa i Konstantina Mlađeg.

U dugom nizu, poslednji rad iz ove radionice je slitak od zlata iz mesta Feldioara u Transilvaniji iskovan 379. koji, osim žiga niške radionice, nosi reljefne biste trojice careva – Gracijana, Teodosija I i Valentijana II. Sve ovo upućuje na veliku vekovnu koncentraciju carske vlasti u Naisu.

HRIŠĆANSKI ŽIVOT ANTIČKOG NIŠA

Naiska episkopija najverovatnije je oformljena u periodu od 325. do 330, između dva za hrišćanstvo važna datuma: Prvog Vaseljenskog sabora (325) i proglašenja grčkog grada Vizanta za Novi Rim (kasnije Konstantinopolj), prestonicu Istočnog rimskog carstva. Na ovakvo mišljenje navodi podatak da Prvom Vaseljenskom saboru nije prisustvovao episkop Naisa, dok su u vreme osnivanja Konstantinopolja postojali brojni hramovi u rodnom gradu cara Konstantina.

Prve pomene episkopije Naisa nalazimo šest godina posle Konstantinove smrti (343). Iz dokumenata Filipoljskog sabora održanog te godine saznajemo da su arijanski episkopi zamerili tadašnjem episkopu Naisa Gaudenciju (Gaudentius) što se ne pridržava uputstava

svoga prethodnika, arijanca Kirijaka (Kiriakus), već ispoveda veru kako je ustanovljeno na Prvom Vaseljenskom saboru. Gaudencije, ne samo da je ispovedao pravu veru, već je na saboru održanom od novembra 343. do aprila 344. u Serdici, današnjoj Sofiji, bio jedan od najaktivnijih episkopa. Zahvaljujući njegovom zauzimanju, episkop Aleksandrije Atanasije, pravoslavni svetitelj poznatiji kao Sv. Atanasije Veliki, rehabilitovan je od lažnih optužbi.

Po završenom Saboru, Atanasije je u znak zahvalnosti pošao u Nais sa Gaudencijem, gde je dočekaio Vaskrs 344. godine i služio liturgiju. Ovaj trenutak je jedan od svetlijih u skoro dve hiljade dugoj istoriji Niša, a Gaudencije je ostao zapamćen kao jedan od retkih pravovernih episkopa Naisa do 6. stoleća. Nakon njega Naisom vlada duhovni mrak. Bonos (Bonosos), episkop Naisa čiji potpis nalazimo među prisutnima na Sirmijumskom saboru 351, otvoriće listu episkopa jeretika koji su se nalazili na episkopskoj stolici Naisa sve do VI stoleća. U historiografiji je ovaj niški episkop vrlo često pogrešno poistovećivan sa episkopom Serdike, današnje Sofije.

Iako je Bonos proglašavan za jeretika na lokalnim saborima u Makedoniji, Solunu i 391. godine u Kapui (Italija), što je, sa svoje strane, potvrđeno nešto kasnije na saboru ilirskih episkopa na kome je doneta odluka da bude zbačen sa episkopske stolice, njega ova kazna nikada nije snašla. On je, i pored zabrane, rukopolagao sveštenike i đakone, neprestano šireći svoje učenje od koga nije odstupio ni posle nekoliko razgovora sa Nikitom, episkopom Remesiane (Bela Palanka), kasnijim svetiteljem. Prema pismima pape Inoćentija episkopu niškom Markijanu (Martianus), vidimo da je Bonos 409. godine još uvek bio episkop Niša, dok drugi dokument iz 414. g. svedoči da je tada još bio u životu. O njegovom nasledniku Markijanu nemamo, pored navedenog pisma, ni jedan drugi podatak.

Nakon Markijana, na episkopskoj stolici u Nišu našao se Dalmacije (Dalmatius) (448–449). O njemu znamo jedino da je bio učesnik tzv. „razbojničkog“ sabora u Efesu 449. godine na kome se osuđuje Flavinijanov sabor održan prethodne godine, kao i sam patrijarh Flavinijan. Međutim, većina episkopa iz Ilirika, među kojima je bio i sam Dalmacije, bila je protiv monofisita. Nije nam poznato ko je bio episkop u vreme kada je Niš bio razrušen skoro do temelja od

strane Huna 441. godine, ali 448. godine, kada nailazimo na pomen Dalmacija, kroz Niš prolazi vizantijski pisac Prisk. U diplomatskoj misiji Teodosija II, putujući na pregovore sa Atilom, Prisk je ostavio sledeći opis jednog dela Niša koji nam može biti vrlo zanimljiv za dalja istraživanja. U jednom delu on kaže: „Kad smo stigli do Niša, našosmo grad sasvim opusteo pošto je do temelja bio porušen od neprijatelja. U ruševinama hramova bili su neki ljudi koji su se tu zadržavali zbog bolesti. Prenoćismo na čistini, malo podalje od reke, pošto je sav obalski prostor bio pokriven kostima onih što su u borbi poginuli“.

Podatak koji ovde Prisk navodi – da je u razrušenom gradu bilo hramova u kojima su se neki ljudi zadržali zbog bolesti – izuzetno je važan. Ovo svedočanstvo ide u prilog pretpostavke da je Nais, kao episkopski centar, imao hram ili hramove koji su bili posvećeni lokalnim hrišćanskim mučenicima, naročito poštovanim u ovom gradu. Ovome u prilog govore i neki izvori kao što je spis *Pohvala svetiteljima* Sv. Viktrikija, episkopa današnjeg Ruana u Francuskoj, u kome on, pored Rima, Konstantinopolja, Antiohije i Soluna navodi Niš kao mesto u kome se čuvaju mošti stradalih za veru Hristovu. Iako piše u množini, Sv. Viktrikije imenom navodi jedino Sv. Prokopija čiji se kult zaštitnika žena i dece vrlo brzo proširio i dugo sačuvao u narodu. Pored kulta Sv. Prokopija, Niš je imao svoje lokalne svetitelje, što nam dokazuju i arheološka otkrića u prvoj polovini 20. stoleća. Na istočnom zidu grobnice koja je pronađena u naselju Jagodin-mala, a koja je datirana u pozno 4. stoleće, iznad ulaza prikazan je Hristov monogram u vencu od palminog lišća, dok su sa njegove leve i desne strane predstavljene dve muške stojeće figure (jedna drži otvorenu knjigu, a druga blagosilja). Kao pandan ovim predstavama, na zapadnom zidu grobnice prikazan je istovetan motiv za koji su ranije postojale pretpostavke da se radi o predstavama apostola Petra i Pavla. U novije vreme sve su argumentovanije tvrdnje da se radi o predstavama lokalnih svetitelja. .

Ova pretpostavka je potkrepljena i prisustvom martirijuma samo nekoliko stotina metara zapadnije od grobnice za koji ćemo samo na ovom mestu reći da je njegova starost datirana u 3. stoleće.

Arheološka istraživanja Niša i okoline u 20. stoleću dala su više nego očekivane rezultate, dajući nam sliku jednog ekonomski, verski i politički snažnog centra Gornje Mezije. Jedini nama poznati hramovi koje je Prisk mogao videti i opisati, nalaze se na desnoj obali Nišave, uže poznatoj kao Jagodin-mala. Tu je na lokalitetu „Grčka njiva“ februara 1933. otkriven temelj hrama iz 4. stoleća. Veličina ovog hrama nije bila mala: sam hram bio je dug 24,35 m i širok 10,40 m. Ulaz u hram bio je na zapadnoj strani između dva mramorna stuba, od kojih je ostao postament jednoga; razmak između njih iznosio je 3 m.

Još većih razmera bio je hram koji je, kao i prethodni, otkopavan 1933. godine: deo koji je do tada iskopan bio je širine 22 m. Prema ostacima, i ovaj hram je smešten u 4. stoleće. Ovoj grupi hramova treba pridružiti i onaj otkriven u Malošištu 1882. koji je imao osnovu veću od manastira Studenice. Neki istraživači smatrali su da se radi o manastiru u kome su čuvane mošti Sv. Prokopija. Nažalost, dok je u prva dva hrama pronađeno dosta predmeta koji su ukazivali da se radi o građevinama iz 4. stoleća (kao novac sa likom cara Konstantina), ovaj ćurlinski hram nije za sobom ostavio slične dokaze koji bi svedočili o njegovoj starosti.

Kako nemamo nijedan drugi dokument koji bi dokumentovao Dalmacija ili nekog drugog episkopa u celoj drugoj polovini 5. stoleća, kada je srušen najveći broj gradova Gornje Mezije pod naletom Huna, teško je sklopiti sliku svega onoga što se dešavalo u ovom periodu na geografskom položaju današnje Srbije. Zato i ne treba da čudi što se sa narednim niškim episkopom Gajanusom (Gaianus) srećemo tek oko 516. godine. On je, nakon Gaudencija, prvi pravoverni episkop Niša. Poznato je da je prihvatio i poštovao odluke IV Halkidonskog sabora. Oštro protivljenje monofizitima dovelo je do toga da car Atanasije pozove u Konstantinopolj grupu ilirskih episkopa, koju su činili Alkison iz Nikopolja u Epiru, Lavrentije iz Ohrida, Dominije iz Serdike (Sofija), Evangelos iz Pautalije (Ćustendil) i sam Gajanus. Tom prilikom su ovi episkopi odgovarali pred carem Anastasijem i opet ponovili neslaganje sa monofizitskim učenjem, što je za Alkisona i Gajanusa bilo kobno s obzirom da se nisu vratili u svoja episkopska mesta iz Konstantinopolja. Po svoj prilici obojica su otrovani.

Kada je 518. godine jak zemljotres pogodio naselje Ulpianu (Ulpiana) u kojoj je već uveliko bio razvijen kult Sv. Flora i Lavra (kojima je tu bila podignuta i crkva) na temeljima naselja podigao je Justinijan Veliki drugu Justinijanu – Iustiniana Secunda. Njen prvi episkop Pavle pojavljuje se 553. godine na V Vaseljenskom saboru, sve vreme jednodušno sarađujući sa Projektusom (Proiectus), episkopom Niša. Novelom od 14. aprila 535. godine Justinijan Veliki je osnovao arhiepiskopiju u svom rodnom mestu kojoj su bile potčinjene sve episkopije Ilirika (na severu do Niša, na istoku do Arčera). Novelama 11 i 131 jasno je kontituisana ova crkvena jedinica, njen položaj i nadležnost.

Poslednji u nizu niških episkopa, u periodu kojim se bavimo, jeste Projektus (Proiectus) za kojeg nam je poznato samo da je učestvovao na V Vaseljenskom saboru u Carigradu 553. i da je tom prilikom izrazio veliku lojalnost arhiepiskopu Benenatu rečima: „Pristajem uz arhiepiskopa Benenata i njemu odgovaram“. Inače, sam Projektus nije uzeo aktivnog učešća u radu Sabora, već je odseo kod nekog Masencija. Pretpostavlja se da nije smeo da se upusti u spor „Tri poglavlja“ jer je to podrazumevalo i direktno suprotstavljanje caru Justinijanu.

RAZRUŠENJE NAISA

Sredinom 5. stoleća život u Naisu je potpuno zamro usled upada najpre Huna (441), a potom i Gota (471) i pustošenja koja su oni sobom doneli. Celo jedno stoleće je Niš bio na margini događaja i uglavnom u posedu Gota, tako da je tek Justinijan I, utvrđujući granice Carstva na limesu, u periodu od 530. do 532. godine obnovio Nais kao strateški važno mesto za odbranu od nadirućih Slovena, koji su ovim prostorom prošli krećući se ka Solunu oko 550. godine i najverovatnije ga opustošili u potpunosti.

Pad vizantijskog Niša određuje se prestankom prometa novca u gradu (612–614). Približno u ovo vreme dolazi do zamiranja života u gradovima Ilirika.

SREDNJI VEK

Nema poznatih izvora koji na bilo koji način svedoče šta se zbivalo sa Nišem u 7. i 8. stoleću. Već od 9. stoleća, kada susedna Bugarska počinje da se teritorijalno širi, Niš potpada pod Bugarsku, dok se niška episkopija pominje u dokumentima iz 10. stoleća kao sastavni deo bugarske crkve. Sa osnivanjem Samuilovog carstva u drugoj polovini 10. stoleća, oblast Niša postaje sastavni deo ovog carstva, ali tek u 11. stoleću dolazi do vidnijih promena. Vizantijski car Vasilije II (976–1025) je 1014. teško porazio Samuila i preuzeo većinu teritorija koje je ovaj vladar imao u svom posedu – među njima se nalazio i Niš. Vasilije II je započeo obnovu utvrđenja koja su se nalazila na važnijim saobraćajnicama, tako da su potpuno obnovljeni Beograd i Niš. U njih su smeštene vizantijske vojne posade, a kada su sukobi prestali, pristupilo se sređivanju crkvenih prilika.

U carskoj povelji Vasilija II iz 1020. godine nabrojane su sve episkopije koje su se nalazile pod Ohridskom arhiepiskopijom, koja je predstavljala stub vizantijske politike u osvojenim zemljama. U ovoj povelji pominje se i niška episkopija koja se nalazi od sredačke (sofijske) eparhije do međa braničevske arhiepiskopije, pored gradskog polja obuhatajući Mokro (kod Bele Palanke), Prokuplje, Toplicu i Svrljig.

Antivizantijski ustanci su bili česti na ovim prostiorima, podsticani iz Ugarske ili Bugarske. Tako je 1040. Petar Odeljan, navodni Samuilov potomak, finansijski potpomognut iz Ugarske, iskoristio nezadovoljstvo u narodu i slabljenje centralne vlasti u Vizantiji i digao ustanak krećući se Pomoravljem od Beograda, preko Niša do Skoplja. Iako je imao sve izglede da uspe, ustanak je vrlo brzo bio

ugušen zahvaljujući neslozi vođa. Posle ovog incidenta, Vizantija je u Nišu i Beogradu postavila stalnu vojnu posadu.

U okviru žestokih sukoba koji su se odvijali između Ugarske i Vizantije na prostoru Ilirika došao je u jednom trenutku na red i Niš. Nakon bitke kod Mancikerta 1072. godine, koja je za Vizantiju bila fatalna, i nakon zarobljavanja samog cara Romana Diogena, Ugarska je mobilisala sve trupe žestoko napavši Srem, da bi onda preduzela višemesečnu opsadu Beograda. Nakon sloma odbrambenog sistema kod Dunava i predaje Beograda, Ugarima je bio otvoren put ka jugu, niz Moravu, tako da su vrlo brzo stigli do Niša, osvojili ga i opljačkali. U velikom plenu osvajača našla se i ruka Svetog Prokopija, koja se nalazila u Crkvi Sv. Prokopija, čiji kult je bio izuzetno poštovan u ovoj sredini. Ugari su ruku Sv. Prokopija čuvali u Crkvi Sv. Dimitrija u Sremu sve do 1164. godine, kada ju je vizantijski car Manojlo I Komnin u sukobu sa Ugarima ponovo preuzeo i naredio da se priključi moštima samog Sv. Prokopija koje su se i dalje nalazile u Crkvi Sv. Prokopija u Nišu.

Na saboru u Klermonu 1095. godine papa Urban II je najpre inicirao, a potom i pozvao na rat koji bi krstaška vojska vodila protiv muslimana na Bliskom istoku. Ovaj poziv vernicima da oslobode Hristov grob imao je u drugom planu smirivanje naraslih tenzija u zapadnoj Evropi, usled ogromnog broja gladnih i nezadovoljnih ljudi koji su sada mogućnost zarade videli u ovakvom pohodu. Tako je veliki broj bezemljaša iz Francuske, Nemačke i ostalih okolnih zemalja krenuo pod vođstvom Petra Pustinjaka. Narastajuća vojska je vremenom postajala prava rulja željna plena, tako da je mnoge usputne gradove opljačkala. Tako su juna 1096. godine na prevaru pobili preko 4000 ljudi u Zemunu, što je navelo Nikitu, zapovednika vizantijske vojske u Beogradu, da naredi povlačenje svojih snaga ka Nišu, u međuvremenu iščekujući carsku naredbu. Sama činjenica da je vizantijska vojska napustila zidine Beograda i krenula da se povlači u Niš, „uzdajući se u snagu njegovih gradskih bedema“, kako kaže jedan vizantijski istoričar, govori o odbrambenoj snazi niške tvrđave i garnizona u njoj.

Vojska Petra Pustinjaka je prvih dana jula 1096. prešla Moravu i ulogorila se nedaleko od Niša. Nedugo zatim, grupa od oko hiljadu krstaša je jurnula preko mosta na glavnu kapiju tvrđave odakle ih je organizovana odbrana sastavljena od vojnika garnizona i građana Niša odbacila preko mosta, dok je veliki broj ili poginuo na licu mesta ili se udavio u brznoj i dubokoj Nišavi. Prema sačuvanim podacima, stradalo je 10000 ljudi i 2000 kola zajedno sa novcem. Petar Pustinjak je nastavio ka Sofiji, a kasnije grupe ritera krstaša zaticale su u okolini Niša s jeseni 1096. zaostale ljude iz Petrove vojske. U narednim godinama Niš je dobio zapovednika grada koji je nosio titulu duksa i koji je rukovodio gradom u ratu i miru. Kada je 1114. godine Nišu zapretila opasnost od Kumana, koji su sa severa napadali Vizantiju, car je hitno poslao vojna pojačanja Braničevu i Nišu.

U narednom periodu došlo je do većih sukoba između Vizantije i Ugarske. Ovi sukobi su jasno pokazali da je odbrambeni sistem srednjeg Podunavlja i Pomoravlja počivao na vojnoj organizaciji niške oblasti. Od 1048. godine interes Vizantije u predelu Niša i Ovčeg Polja branili su Pečenezi, nomadski narod turskog porekla. Vizantijska vlast u Nišu se ustalila nakon izbijanja velikog ugarsko-vizantijskog rata 1127. i primirja koje je usledilo dve godine kasnije (1129). Dva vladara su se složila da granica ostane nepromenjena čime je Vizantija uspela da odbrani svoje tvrđave na Dunavu (Beograd, Braničevo), dok se Zemun nalazio pod ugarskom vlašću. Tako se ustalila i vizantijska vlast u Nišu.

Car Manojlo I je odlučio da preduzme još jedan pohod protiv Srbije. Pred kraj leta 1150. godine velika vizantijska vojska, koju je predvodio lično Manojlo I, okupila se kod Niša. Vojska se ulogorila severno od Niša, van grada, na pola puta prema selu Sečanica, kako to precizno saopštava Jovan Kinam. Odatle je Manojlo I rukovodio svim operacijama te godine, dok se i sam nije uključio u borbu. U tim događajima veliku ulogu imao je niški zapovednik Mihailo Vrana. On je spadao među najznačajnije vojskovođe toga doba. Prema kazivanjima savremenika, bio je veoma vešt ratnik, vojskovođa samostalnih odluka, smelo se upuštao u borbu sa Srbima i dobro je poznavao njihov način ratovanja. On je učestvovao u odlučujućoj srpsko-vizantijskoj

borbi koja se odigrala nedaleko od rečice Tare, u valjevskom kraju, u poznu jesen 1150. godine. Srpsko-ugarska koalicija je pretrpela strahovit poraz, a veliki župan Uroš bio je prinuđen da obnovi vazalske odnose prema vizantijskom caru. U godinama koje su dolazile, Niš je imao važnu ulogu u balkanskoj politici Vizantije.

Sukobi Vizantije i Ugarske potrajali su sa kraćim prekidima do 1155. godine. U to vreme je Andronik Komnin, rođak cara Manojla I Komnina i kasniji car, postavljen da obavlja funkciju duksa u Beogradu i Nišu. Tokom šezdesetih godina 12. stoleća Niš je bio središte vizantijske politike prema Srbiji. Ranije započeto širenje Srbije svakako se nije moglo sprečiti, ono se moglo samo odložiti. Car Manojlo I je više puta dolazio u Niš, u nastojanju da smeni nepokorne srpske župane i da ih zameni ličnostima koje su obećavale više poštovanja za iznuđene vazalske odnose. Međutim, i oni su ubrzo nastavljali borbu za osamostaljivanje zemlje. Održavali su i dalje savezničke odnose s Ugarskom, što su u Carigradu uvek shvatali kao jasno neprijateljski čin. Tako je 1163. godine car Manojlo s vojskom boravio u Nišu, u nameri da župana Desu nagna na pokornost. Kada ovaj to nije prihvatio, bio je osuđen i uhapšen.

Nakon upada u Srem i vraćanja ranije otete ruke Sv. Prokopija u Niš (1164), Manojlo I je naredio da se obnove najvažnije vizantijske tvrđave, predosetivši da nailazi vreme ozbiljnih sukoba. Posao je poverio dvojici izuzetno odanih ljudi – Konstantinu Anđelu i Vasiliju Tripsihu. Pod njihovim nadzorom obnovljeni su bedemi Zemuna, Beograda, Braničeva i Niša. U novim sukobima između Vizantije i Ugarske (1166–1167) u Sremu se istakao bivši dux Niša Mihajlo Vrana, ali je završni udarac Ugarskoj zadao Andronik Kondostefan, koji je doveo vojsku iz Carigrada, preko Niša i Beograda.

U ovom periodu (1165) na istorijsku pozornicu stupa kao župan Stefan Nemanja. Srpski vladari su prema vizantijskom caru imali vazalske obaveze. Prema ustaljenom sistemu vlasti, Nemanja je dobio na upravu jedan deo srpskih zemalja (Toplica, Ibar, Rasina). U to vreme je funkciju velikog župana vršio Nemanjin brat Tihomir. Na jednom od svojih ratnih pohoda, u oblasti Niša, susreo se vizantijski car Manojlo I Komnin sa Stefanom Nemanjom. Odlikovao ga je

„carskim sanom“, izgleda dvorskom titulom, i obdario zemljom. Tako je Nemanja dobio Dubočicu (kraj oko Leskovca) pod uslovom da je koriste on i njegovi potomci. Nešto kasnije (1166) Nemanja je preuzeo od Tihomira i vrhovnu vlast u Srbiji, već tada jasno pokazujući znake nezadovoljstva vizantijskom politikom. Brzo se priključio protivnicima cara Manojla.

Godine 1171. izbio je veliki rat između Vizantije i Venecije. Pokušavši da iskoristi borbu Vizantije na nekoliko frontova radi realizovanja mogućnosti oslobođenja Srbije, Nemanja je uspostavio veze s Venecijom, Nemačkom i Ugarskom. Buknule su borbe u Srbiji. Srpske čete su 1172. godine sve češće napadale oblast duž puta Beograd–Braničevo–Niš. Međutim, međunarodne okolnosti su se brzo izmenile. Venecija je u ratovanju na moru od proleća 1172. g. zapala u ozbiljne teškoće, a iste godine je u Ugarskoj umro kralj Stefan III, koga je trebalo da nasledi vizantijski štićenik Bela III, koji je živio u Carigradu. Pošto je izgubio važnog saveznika, a imajući u vidu da se ka njemu kretao Manojlo I sa svojom vojskom, Stefanu Nemanji nije preostalo ništa drugo do da se preda. Pošto ga je Manojlo I odveo u Carigrad i na njegovom primeru pokazao kako će proći neposlušni vazali, nakon izvesnog vremena pustio je Nemanju da se vrati na funkciju velikog župana uz obavezu da više neće ustajati na njega. Nemanja je svoje obećanje održao i sve do Manojlove smrti 1180. bio lojalni vazal. Međutim, već 1182, osetivši nesređeno stanje u Vizantiji, kao i da borbe za presto odvlače pažnju sa Balkana zabavljenom carigradskom plemstvu, Ugarska napada gradove na Dunavu – Beograd i Braničevo – u čemu će joj se 1183. pridružiti Stefan Nemanja sa svojim jedinicama. Ugarsko-srpske snage će napredovati sve do Sofije. Bio je to prvi tako dubok prodor srpske vojske na vizantijsku teritoriju. Kada je Isak II Andeo, novi vladar Vizantije, ušao u rođачke veze sa Belom III, Nemanja je potražio novog i snažnijeg zaštitnika u borbi protiv Vizantije.

Pošto je u Zapadnoj Evropi oživela ideja o pokretanju krstaškog rata protiv muslimana na Bliskom istoku, najpoznatiji vladari su ponudili svoje učešće – engleski kralj Ričard Lavlje Srce, francuski kralj Filip II Avgust i nemački car Fridrih I Barbarosa. Kada se

ispostavilo da jedino nemačka vojska namerava da se kopnenim putem prebaci preko Ugarske, odnosno balkanskih zemalja, Stefan Nemanja je odlučio da u nemačkom vladaru potraži saveznika u daljoj borbi protiv Vizantije. On je u tom cilju uputio poslanike u Nemačku 1188. godine. Stigli su na Fridrihov dvor u Nirnbergu decembra te godine. Tu su, prema dobijenim uputstvima, izrazili veliko zadovoljstvo Stefana Nemanje povodom predstojećeg carevog puta koji vodi kroz njegovu zemlju. Nemanja je pismeno izvestio cara da mu priprema svečani doček u najpoznatijem od svojih gradova, Nišu, koji namerava da učini prestonicom svoje države. Izgleda da su srpski izaslanici ovom prilikom ponudili povoljne uslove snabdevanja za nemačku vojsku, kako to svedoče kasnije događaji.

Nemačka vojska je krenula u pohod u leto 1189. godine. Poslednjih dana juna nemački car je stigao u Beograd i posle kraćeg zadržavanja nastavio put prema Braničevu, gde ga je dočekao vizantijski vojni zapovednik. Na daljem putu krstaši su nailazili na mnogobrojne teškoće, čak i neprolazne deonice puta. Srpski poslanici su izašli u susret nemačkoj vojsci dok se ona približavala Nišu, a zatim je Fridrihu I Barbarosi i njegovoj pratnji u samom gradu priređen veoma svečani doček. Srpski vladar se postarao da svoga gosta dostojno primi. Sam Nemanja je s bratom Stracimirom i velikom pratnjom izašao pred najmoćnijeg evropskog vladara s darovima koji su razmenjeni na uobičajeni način. Pregovori su počeli u Nišu 27. jula 1189. i postignut je sporazum da, ukoliko Nemačka započne neprijateljstva protiv Vizantije, Srbija priskoči u pomoć sa 20000 vojnika. Ovom prilikom ugovoren je brak između Toljena, sina Nemanjinog brata kneza Miroslava Humskog i kćeri istarskog markgrofa Berhtolda od Andeksa, koji se nalazio u carevoj pratnji u Nišu i koji je odigrao značajnu ulogu u srpsko-nemačkim pregovorima. Tih dana su se u Nišu pojavili i predstavnici bugarskog vođe Petra koji su, takođe, nudili nemačkom vladaru vojnu pomoć za borbu protiv Vizantije. Fridrih I Barbarosa nije želeo nikakve intervencije na Balkanu jer bi ga to odvratilo od cilja njegovog pohoda, ali je bio zadovoljan postignutim dogovorom. Otpravivši ga iz Niša, Stefan Nemanja je krenuo u Plovdivsku kotlinu u jesen 1189.

godine. Nije ni slutio da će za nekoliko meseci ostati ponovo sam usled smrti nemačkog cara.

Vizantijski car Isak II Anđeo uzvratio je strahovito. U bici kod Morave 1190. u kojoj je lično stajao na čelu vizantijskih jedinica, do nogu je potukao Stefana Nemanju i zauzeo Niš koji se 1198. godine pominje kao vizantijski grad. Po uzoru na Manojla I Komnina, Isak II Anđeo je poklonio Nemanji život uz obavezu da na njega ne diže ustanke. Realna je pretpostavka da je poslednji vojnički poraz Stefana Nemanju nagnao da na saboru u Rasu podeli zemlju sinovima, a sam se zamonaši. Ovaj veliki vladar umro je u manastiru Hilandar u 1200. godine kao monah Simeon.

Odmah nakon njegove smrti došlo je do sukoba među braćom Stefanom i Vukanom. U jednom dokumentu iz tog doba navodi se da je Vukan vladao svom srpskom zemljom, pomorskim gradovima i nišavskim predelima. Bugarski car Kalojan je iskoristio svađu braće i 1203. osvojio Niš. Niški episkop Kirik i Crkva Sv. Prokopija navedeni su u sastavu bugarske crkve.

Nakon smrti cara Kalojana vlast u Bugarskoj preuzeo je njegov sestrać Boril (1207–1218). U ovom periodu unutrašnje borbe su uzele maha. Borilov brat Strez je pobegao u Srbiju i tu našao zaštitu i svestranu podršku srpskog vladara Stefana. Strezovo sedište bilo je u gradu Proseku, na Vardaru, dok je njegov boravak u Srbiji uticao na tok srpsko-bugarskih odnosa koji su se kretali u pravcu otvorenog neprijateljstva, naročito od časa kada je latinski car Henrik (1206–1216) sklopio savez sa Borilom oženivši se njegovom ćerkom. Saveznici su svoje oružje odmah okrenuli protiv Srbije s namerom da Stefana prognaju iz države, kako to svedoči sam srpski vladar. Niš je tada bio u srpskoj vlasti i prva meta neprijatelja. Udružena vojska bugarskog vladara i latinskog cara prodrla je 1214. do Niša. Tada je i Strez napustio Stefana i priključio se protivnicima srpskog vladara. On je napao zemlje u gornjem toku Vardara. Tok daljih operacija nije poznat. Zna se da su napadači poraženi kod Niša, a Strez je ubijen.

Međutim, već u proleće sledeće godine (1215), Srbiji je zapretila nova opasnost jer je car Henrik potražio novog saveznika za

borbu protiv Stefana Nemanjića. Ovoga puta bio je to ugarski kralj Andrija II (1205–1235). Prema prethodno, do detalja preciziranom dogovoru, trebalo je da se dvojica vladara sa svojim vojskama susretnu u Nišu i odatle krenu protiv srpskog velikog župana.

Na sastanak u Niš je pozvan i Stefan Nemanjić. Uočivši sve nedaće koje bi donelo udruživanje protivničkih snaga u Nišu, on je nastojao da pregovorima s ugarskim kraljem razbije taj savez. Tako je došlo do važnog susreta između srpskog vladara i kralja Andrije u gradu Ravno (današnja Čuprija). Sam Stefan Nemanjić je zapisao da je proveo dvanaest dana na tom sastanku, čiji je krajnji rezultat bio povoljan za Srbiju – ugarski kralj se nije pridružio Stefanovom protivniku. Dvojica vladara su zatim iz grada Ravno krenula prema Nišu, gde su se sastali sa carem Henrihom koji je bio spreman da si-lom iznudi dobit. Međutim, pošto Ugarska nije ušla u rat, Henrik je neobavljena posla morao da se povuče.

Odnosi sa Ugarskom su se dodatno zakomplikovali od 1202. godine, kada je ugarski kralj, za usluge koje je učinio Vukanu u borbi oko prestola sa Stefanom, uneo u Srbiju i svoju zvaničnu titulu. Ovo je podrazumevalo da kralj Ugarske ima određena prava u Srbiji i on je na tome insistirao. Zbog toga je krunisanje Stefana Nemanjića kraljevskom krunom, dobijenom iz Rima 1217. godine, izazvalo u Budimu veliko ogorčenje i pored činjenice da je svojevremeno sama Ugarska na ovaj način stekla legitimitet. Ugarska je do te mere bila ogorčena priznavanjem samostalnosti Srbiji da je bila spremna da uđe u otvoreni rat, koji je izbegnut zahvaljujući posredovanju Save Nemanjića.

Iz 13. stoleća poznato je da je 1279. godine u Nišu bio episkop Nikodim. Osvajanjima kralja Milutina (1282–1321), a naročito njegovom politikom prema Bugarskoj, Niš dolazi pod srpsku vlast krajem 13. i početkom 14. stoleća. Milutinov sin, kralj Stefan Uroš III Dečanski (1321–1331) se pred kraj svoje vladavine našao na udaru antisrpske koalicije koju su sklopili bugarski car Mihajlo i vizantijski car Andronik III. Rešen da ne čeka da bude napadnut, Stefan Dečanski je jula 1330. godine skupio veliku vojsku kod Dobrič-polja (nadmak Prokuplja) i kod Velbužda (današnjeg Čustendila u Bugarskoj),

a 28. jula 1330. naneo je veliki poraz Bugarima. U ovom boju poginuo je i bugarski car Mihajlo. Stefan Dečanski je u Beloj Palanci primio bugarsko izaslanstvo i uslišio njihovu molbu za mir. Nakon toga odseo je u Nišu, koji je ušao u sastav Srbije Stefana Dečanskog.

U proleće 1333. godine u Nišu je „gospođa carica, supruga cara Bugarske“ naredila da se dvojici dubrovačkih trgovaca oduzme roba u vrednosti od 200 perpera. Ovde se svakako radi o carici Ani, sestri srpskog kralja Stefana Dečanskog, koja je zajedno sa sinom svrgnuta s vlasti u Bugarskoj 1331. godine, a potom se povukla u Niš, odakle je kasnije otišla u Dubrovnik.

I u narednom periodu Niš je bio pod srpskom vlašću tokom čitave vlade Stefana Dušana (1331–1355). Niš sa okolinom je došao pod vlast kneza Lazara Hrebeljanovića oko 1372. godine, kada je ovaj izbio u red najmoćnijih oblasnih gospodara. Pobedom nad Nikolom Altomanovićem 1373. i Radičem Brankovićem Rastislavićem 1379. njemu su pripali krajevi oko Zapadne Morave sa Užicom, oblasti Rudnika, Braničeva i Kučeva. U toj pretkosovskoj državi pod njegovom vlašću su bili Niš, Kruševac, Užice, Novo Brdo i Rudnik. Svojom delatnošću, knez Lazar je preuzeo vodeću ulogu u odbrani zemlje, koja se već 1381. našla na udaru turskih snaga koje su prodrle u Pomoravlje, ali su ovaj napad s teškom mukom odbila dvojica vojvoda iz redova Lazareve vlastele. Već drugi upad Turaka, koji se zbio 1386. godine, bio je daleko snažniji i organizovaniji, tako da je Lazar u bici na Pločniku u Toplici uspeo da zaustavi dublje prodiranje Turaka, ali je istovremeno izgubio Niš. Tako je Lazareva vojska pune tri godine imala u svom zaleđu izgubljeni grad. Bitka na Kosovu 1389. godine, koja je u mnogo čemu bila presudna za dalji tok srpske istorije, dala je svojevrsan pečat dugogodišnjoj agoniji u kojoj se, nakon Dušanove smrti, našla Srbija.

Niš je ponovo potpao pod srpsku vlast početkom 15. stoleća. Nakon učešća u Angorskoj bici (1402) na strani Bajazita I, despot Stefan Lazarević je vratio pod svoj uticaj Pirot i Niš oko 1404. godine zbog čega te iste godine sultan Sulejman traži od njega saglasnost da prođe kroz ove oblasti. Međutim, Niš je nakon petogodišnjih sukoba

1409. preuzeo Vuk Branković, koji je uživao podršku novog sultana Muse (1411–1413), velikog neprijatelja despota Stefana Lazarevića koji je ostao lojalan Sulejmanu. Dolaskom Mehmeda I na turski presto (1413–1421), despot Stefan Lazarević dobija pod svoju upravu Niš, Znepolje (predeo oko bugarske granice) i Koprijan, koji su, nakon deset godina, ponovo u sastavu Srbije.

Već 1425. godine su srpska despotovina i Ugarska pokušale da sklope antitursku koaliciju. Tadašnji sultan Murat II je brzo reagovao, tako da je iste godine opustošen Niš, uz još nekoliko većih gradova u Srbiji. Napad turskih trupa na despotovinu je bio daleko organizovaniji i usledio je u leto 1427. godine. Turci su preko Niša provalili u Pomoravlje, u kome je zavladao paničan strah usled iznenadne smrti despota Stefana Lazarevića. U brzom napadu, pod tursku vlast padaju Kruševac, Golubac i još neka manja mesta uz Moravu i Dunav. Već 1439. godine osvojena je cela Srbija.

Despot Đurađ Branković je uspeo da u Ugarskoj pokrene rat protiv Turaka koji su, sa svoje strane, želeli da uklone opasnost bilo koje antiturske kolacije koju bi predvodila Ugarska. Na čelo hrišćanske vojske, koja je bila sastavljena od pograničnih odreda banatskih Srba, u jesen 1443. godine zvanično je stao ugarski kralj Vladislav, dok su stvarne vođe bili Đurađ Branković i Janko Hunjadi. Prvi sudar sa Turskom vojskom imali su 3. novembra 1443. između Aleksinca i Niša. U Nišu je kralj Vladislav odseo nakon prve izvojevane pobeđe. Posle nekoliko meseci borbe u zimskim uslovima, hrišćanska vojska je porazila turske odrede na planini Kunovici 2. januara 1444. kada je već bila primorana na povlačenje. Kada se krajem januara vratila u Beograd, vojska je za sobom ostavila sva mesta koja je privremeno oslobodila ponovnoj turskoj okupaciji.

Nakon serije kratkih i neuspešnih akcija pod vođstvom Janka Hunjadija i ostalih srpskih junaka, nakon zauzeća Konstantinopolja 1453. godine, Mehmed II je krenuo u raščišćavanje odnosa u Srbiji. Nakon pet godina pružanja otpora, 1459. godine je Smederevo, a sa njim i srednjovekovna srpska država, palo u tursko ropstvo koje će potrajati narednih četiri i po stoleća.

PERIOD POD TURCIMA DO 1878. (1459–1878)

Već na početku vladavine sultana Bajazita II (1481–1512), u okviru administrativne podele osvojenih teritorija i lakšeg sprovođenja zakona na njima, oformljena je posebna administrativna jedinica (nahija) u Nišu. Prvo što je urađeno po uspostavljanju vlasti u gradu bilo je popisivanje stanovništva radi određivanja poreza. Zahaljujući ovim popisima, poznato je da je 1498. godine niška nahija imala oko 33000 stanovnika, od čega su većinsko činili pravoslavni Srbi. Ovaj broj će se smanjiti već u narednom popisu iz 1516. usled kuge koja je harala Turskim carstvom, tako da je te godine zabeleženo oko 32000 stanovnika. Drastično opadanje broja stanovnika niške nahije zabeleženo je 1564. godine kada je evidentirano između 22000 i 25000 stanovnika. Obaveze stanovništva bile su propisane dokumentom *ZAKON ZA NIŠ*, nastalim već 1498. i dorađenim 1516. godine.

Stanovništvo Niša je u prvo vreme bilo sastavljeno u velikoj meri od Srba, dok je veoma mali procenat odlazio na Rome, Vlahe i Turke. Tek kasnije, sa razvojem trgovine i osvajanjima Sulejmana Veličanstvenog, dolazi do porasta broja stanovnika – muslimana, a beleže se i prve jevrejske porodice (što se u jednom izveštaju iz 1584. pominje kolonija u Nišu, osnovana od strane dubrovačkih trgovaca, koja je imala svog sveštenika i brojala oko 200 ljudi).

U periodu do 17. stoleća u Nišu su se jasno uočavale državne građevine: Tvrdava, džamija sultana Murata i most. Ove građevine pominju putopisci koji iz zemalja zapadne Evrope putuju u Konstantinopolj – dubrovčanin Feliks Petančić (1512), austijanac Kornelije Duplicije Šeper (1533), mlečanin Benedeto Ramberti (1534), Antun Vrančić (1553), Hans Dernšvam (1553), Štefan Gerlah (1573) i drugi.

Ono što je karakteristično za većinu putopisaca, koji su u periodu od 16. do 17. stoleća prolazili ovim predelima putujući ka Sofiji i Konstantinopolju, je činjenica da je velika većina predstavljala izaslanike sa evropskih dvorova sa jednim jedinim zadatkom – snimiti stanje u balkanskim zemljama koje se nalaze pod Turcima i na osnovu ovih izveštaja razraditi sopstvenu odbranu.

Pored navedenih građevina, skoro svi putopisci ovog perioda navode postojanje jedne pravoslavne crkve-brvnare, dok je krajem 16. stoleća u niškoj nahiji zabeleženo tek 8 živih manastira, a 7 opustelih. Ukoliko se ima u vidu da je prema prvom popisu iz 1498. bilo 14 živih manastira i 11 opustelih, potpuno postaje jasno u kojoj meri su visoki porezi i bitno otežani uslovi života uticali na svakodneni život Niša i okoline.

Dubrovčani su održavali žive trgovačke veze sa Nišem, ali su i Nišlije plasirale svoje proizvode preko Dubrovnika, naročito od druge polovine 16. stoleća. U prvo vreme, Nišlije su se bavile zanatima za koje nije bilo potrebno posjedovanje radnji, a na ceni su bili voskarski, sapundžijski, kožarski i užarski zanati. U ovom periodu se od svih kultura u okolini Niša najviše gajio pirinač.

Krajem 17. stoleća dolazi do austro-turskog rata (1683–1699) u kome je prekretnica bio neuspeli Kara-Mustafin pohod na Beč 1683. godine. Uporedo sa turskim kretanjem na Beč, dolazi do serije lokalnih pobuna, čiji je cilj bio destabilizovanje Turske. Te pobune su prestale tek potpisivanjem Karlovačkog mira 1699. godine. U ovom periodu Niš je, poput većine srpskih gradova, naročito u periodu od 1687. do 1690. godine, doživeo velike paljevine i razaranja. Krunu austrijskih nastojanja da se probiju u unutrašnjost Turske, što dublje niz Moravu, realizovao je 25. septembra 1689, posle kraćih borbi sa posadom niške Tvrdave, austrijski markgrof Ludvig Badenski koji je sa svojih 17000 vojnika osvojio Niš. Austrijanci su držali Niš nepunih godinu dana. Već početkom 1690. godine italijanski inženjer Peroni je uradio nacrt obnove polusrušene Tvrdave. U sledu daljih događaja, posle duge i junačke odbrane samog grada od Turaka, austrijska posada je bila primorana da preda grad. To je 9. septembra 1690. učinio austrijski general Štomberg potpisavši predaju grada.

Sultan Mustafa II vodio je od 1695. do 1697. tri pohoda, tako da su, sve dok bitka kod Sente (11. septembra 1697. godine) nije

odlučila ishod ovog rata, porezi koje je stanovništvo plaćalo višestruko uvećani. Boravak Sultana Mustafe II u Nišu 29. jula 1695. godine imao je za svrhu upoznavanje sa stepenom oštećenosti utvrđenja i njihovom obnovom.

Nastupio je period turske osvete. Zabeleženi su brojni primeri širom Pomoravlja, gde su pobune gušene u krvi, a organizatori surovo kažnjavani. Tako krajem 17. stoleća dolazi do serije organizovanih migracija Srba na sever, preko Dunava u Srem, gde će se pridružiti carskoj vojsci u borbi protiv Turaka. Svakako najbrojnija seoba Srba u vojvođanske krajeve je bila ona pod patrijarhom Arsenijem IV Čarnojevićem. Ovi odredi Srba u carskoj vojsci odigraće veliku ulogu u ratovanjima sa Turcima do sredine 18. stoleća.

Potpisivanje Karlovačkog mira 1699. podrazumevalo je i novu reorganizaciju turskih administrativnih jedinica. Tako je Niš postao sastavni deo Beogradskog pašaluka sa statusom grada-utvrđenja, čiji je prvenstveni cilj bio odbrana ovog dela pašaluka od pobunjenika. Kada je još nespremna Turska objavila rat Rusiji 1710. godine i (poneta početnim uspehom u bici na reci Prut 1711. godine) krenula u rat protiv Austrije, to joj se višestruko osvetilo. Na čelu austrijske vojske nalazio se Evgenije Savojski koji je odneo pobeđu nad turskom vojskom kod Sente 1697. Početkom 1717. zavladao je panika među muslimanskim življem koje je krenulo u povlačenje niz Moravu do Niša, a neki su se dali još dalje u bekstvo, što je sultan Ahmed III pokušao da spreči različitim obećanjima.

U seriji pobeda, Savojski je povratio Temišvar sa Banatom, a već juna 1717. stegao obruč oko Beograda, koji je došao u ruke austrijanaca avgusta iste godine. Na intervenciju Engleske i Holandije, rat je okončan mirovnim sporazumom potpisanim u Požarevcu 21. jula 1718. Posle gubitka Temišvara i Beograda, Porta je ulogu velikih graničnih gradova prenela na Niš i Vidin, a Niš je ujedno postao sedište Rumelijskog ejaleta sve do novog austro-turskog rata 1737–1739. Značaj koji je Niš imao u ovom periodu, kao najvažnije carinsko područje na putu za Konstantinopolj i Solun, bitno je doprineo razvoju grada. Velika vojska, spahije na službi u Tvrđavi, visoki carski činovnici – sve je to uticalo da Niš postane znatno bogatiji mnogim zgradama za smeštaj trgovaca i njihove robe. U grad koji je seobom Srba sveden na varošicu, sada dolaze u većem broju Jevreji

(organizovani u vlastitoj mahali sa desne strane tvrđavskog mosta), Cincari i Grci. Oni su u ovom periodu držali najveći broj niške trgovine kafom i suknom.

Po izbijanju rata, Niš je 27. jula 1737. zauzeo austrijski maršal De Tungen sa svojom vojskom. Kao mnogo puta do tada, Niš je kratko vreme bio u rukama Austrijanaca – usled promenljive ratne sreće, niški garnizon je kapitulirao 18. oktobra iste godine. U naredne dve godine, do kraja austrijsko-turskog rata, Turska je koristila Niš kao mesto prikupljanja snaga za napade ka severu. Mirom potpisanim u Beogradu 18. septembra 1739. utvrđena je granica na Savi i Dunavu, a Niš je, kao najveća tvrđava u sastavu obnovljenog Beogradskog pašaluka, dobio poseban status. U atmosferi narastajućeg grada u kome je bio smešten administrativni centar nekoliko okruga, Niš se izgrađuje najviše zahvaljujući poletu trgovine i zanatstva. Krajem 18. stoleća grad se širi, ali narasta i nezadovoljstvo stanovništva grada načinom turske vladavine. Carstvo, istrošeno u raznim ratovima, opteretilo je porezima običan narod, tako da pismene žalbe sve češće putuju iz Niša u Konstantinopolj. U prvim godinama 19. stoleća među Turcima u Nišu i Srbiji vlada međusobna zavist, pa dolazi do pobuna i ubistava usled slabljenja centralne vlasti.

NIŠ I SRPSKA REVOLUCIJA 1804–1878. DO OSLOBOĐENJA OD TURAKA

Već nakon bitke na Ivankovcu u leto 1805. godine, srpsko stanovništvo je počelo da pristupa ustanku, koji se najpre razvio na severu Srbije. Privremenim oslobođanjem (1806) Toplice sa Kuršumlijom i Prokupljem i Svrlijiga i Knjaževca pokretu, pod vođstvom Đorđa Petrovića – Karađorđa, pridružilo se mnoštvo Nišlija prešavši granicu kod Deligrada. Stanovništvo niško-leskovačkog kraja prišlo je ustanku do marta 1807. godine. Sve češći su bili upadi srpske vojske na nišku teritoriju, tako da se nije ni poštovalo Slobozijsko primirje doneto na pritisak Rusa, koje je podrazumevalo prestanak neprijateljstava u srpsko-turskom frontu kod Niša. Već 1809. godina donela je nove sukobe, junake i žrtve.

Srpska vojska je od 27. aprila do 31. maja 1809. opsedala Niš, ali bez vidljivijeg uspeha. Iako je srpska vojska odnosila manje pobeđe u okolnim selima i sporadičnim sukobima prema brdu Čegar, konačni uspeh je izostajao. Izgubivši strategijsku inicijativu, Srbi su se ukopali na severnoj strani Niša sa velikim brojem šančeva. Ova strategija je potpuno usporila srpsku vojsku, u kojoj je uskoro došlo do trzavica među vojvodama. Kada su Turci iz pravca Sofije razbili odrede Veljka Petrovića i nastavili ka Nišu, dok se u isto vreme iz pravca Leskovca kretalo oko 7000 Turaka, bilo je jasno da se srpska vojska nema čemu nadati. Odlučujuća bitka je trajala dva dana – 30. i 31. maja 1809. godine. Sa turske strane je napadalo oko 20000 vojnika dok je, sa srpske strane, njima bilo suprotstavljeno oko 4000 Srba. Drugog dana očajničke borbe, videvši kako Turci nadiru u masama, resavski vojvoda Stevan Sindelić je pucao u skladište baruta. Ova eksplozija je odnela oko 3000 srpskih i 7000–9000 turskih života. Zapovednik Niša je naredio da se glave poginulih Srba odseku i oderu, te stave u živ malter. Ova građevina, koja je trebalo da zaplaši stanovništvo Niša, nazvana je Čele-kula (na turskom „Kula od lobanja“) i vremenom je postala simbol srpskog otpora. Austrijski izveštaji beleže da je posle ovog događaja 5000–6000 izbeglih ljudi iz niškog, pirotskog i vranjskog okruga došlo na obale Save.

Srpska vojska se našla kod Aleksinca, opet nedaleko od Niša, u jesen 1809, a sam Đorđe Petrović je 1811. sa 3000 vojnika došao do Niša, ali ništa ozbiljnije nije mogao da učini, pa se povukao. Nastupio je period u kome je Niš pomeren iz žiže događaja.

Kada je Miloš Obrenović 1815. godine obnovio ustanak u granicama Beogradskog pašaluka, Niš je ostao po strani. Pritisak Turaka na lokalno stanovništvo je bio preveliki, što nije sprečilo Nišlije da održavaju vezu sa ustaničkom Srbijom, istovremeno stvarajući, obnavljajući i jačajući trgovačke veze sa Jagodinom, Kragujevcem, Požarevcem i Beogradom na severu, a Leskovcem i Skopljem na jugu.

Veliki ustanak u Grčkoj 1821. godine snažno je odjeknuo u susednim zemljama. Niški episkop Melentije, i sam poreklom Grk, pokušao je da organizuje ustanak u Nišu. Zavera je brzo otkrivena, pohapšeno je i u zatvor u Tvrđavi smešteno oko 200 ustanika, a episkop niški Melentije je za Vaskrs 1821. godine obešen na tvrđavskom mostu sa još petoricom viđenih ljudi. Na mesto novog episkopa došao

je Venedikt I, a do oslobođenja Niša od Turaka 1878. episkopi Niša su (posle Venedikta) bili Danilo, Josif, Grigorije, Venedikt II, Nikifor, Joanikije i Kalinik. Inače, niška eparhija je bila u sastavu obnovljene Pečke patrijaršije do 1776. kada je došla u jurisdikciju Vaseljenske, Carigradske patrijaršije, da bi se sa oslobođenjem Niša od Turaka vratila u sastav Kneževine Srbije i Srpske pravoslavne crkve.

Usled pružanja podrške grčkim ustanicima, 1821. godine je razrušeno Moskopolje u severnoj Albaniji i još nekoliko desetina naselja sa prostora Kosova i Metohije i Makedonije, što je uzrokovalo veću migraciju ka severu. Tih godina u sve veće varoši Srbije došao je grčko-cincarsko-jevrejski element koji će u narednim decenijama, a naročito u periodu nakon oslobođenja od Turaka, u velikoj meri izgraditi Niš. Nišlije se u narednom periodu okreću sebi, jačaju trgovačke i kulturne veze, a 1827. traže od kneza Miloša Obrenovića da im pošalje učitelja. Uskoro u Niš stiže Spiridon Jovanović, prvi niški učitelj. Njega finansijski pomažu imućne porodice Hristodulu, Kocić i Harsijades. U ovo vreme jevrejska četvrt je dobila svoj konačni oblik prostirući se na levoj strani Nišave, desno od tvrđavskog mosta, baš kao i grčko-cincarske četvrti koje su jasno uočljive na planu Niša iz 1878.

Nakon ustanaka u istočnoj Srbiji i intervencije Rusije, srpsko-turska granica je 1833. na jugu došla do pred sam Niš. Epiemija kuge koja je pogodila Niš i okolinu u jesen 1837. odnosila je žrtve sve do kraja 1838. godine. U Pirotu je za jedan dan umrlo 126 ljudi, a kako beleži lekar kneza Miloša – Kunibert, u Nišu „koji je brojao jedva 30000 stanovnika, bilo je mrtvih na stotine svakoga dana“. Pored velikih ljudskih žrtava koje je sobom odnela krajem 1838, kuga se nije bitnije odrazila na svakodnevni život Nišlija.

Januara 1835. godine podiglo se šesnaest sela iz okoline Niša, kao rezultat terora koji su nad njima sprovodili Turci. Mnoštvo naroda je u ovom periodu prešlo granicu i otišlo u Srbiju, a spor je rešen povlačenjem Turaka iz tih sela. Treba reći da je od velike pomoći ustanicima bio knez Miloš Obrenović koji je preko svojih prijateljskih veza sa pojedinim Turcima izdejstvovao najpre mirne pregovore pobunjenika i Turaka, a potom i mirno rešenje nastale situacije, koja je rešena početkom leta 1835. godine. Kada je došlo kako do povećavanja broja poreza, tako i do svote koja je trebalo za njih da se odvoji, došlo je do još jedne bune daleko širih razmera.

Stanovništvo iz okoline Niša, Leskovca, Vlasotinca, Pirota i Prokuplja diglo je tzv. Niški ustanak 1841. godine. Na čelu pobunjenika nalazili su se Miloje Jovanović, Nikola Srndak, Stojan Čavdar i Stanko Atanacković. Pobunjenici su se okupili od 3. do 5. aprila 1841, a već sutradan su počele sinhronizovane akcije u okolini Pirota, Bele Palanke, Grdelice i Gornjeg Matejevca kod Niša. Koliko god da su pobunjenici bili međusobno dobro povezani, toliko je izostala pomoć kneza Mihajla Obrenovića koji nije smeo da ulazi u sukob ove vrste. Ustanak je ugušen u krvi 24. aprila, kada je došlo do poslednje bitke.

Život se nastavio dalje. Prva mešovita muška i ženska škola otvorena je 1845. i u njoj je predavala Anastasija – Nasta Dimitrijević, rodnom iz Prizrena. Predavala je u niškim školama sve do 1874. U ovom periodu sela iz okoline Niša dobijaju svoje učitelje. Od 1847. je u Kamenici i Gornjem Matejvcu predavao Damjan Mitrović. Njega nasleđuju u Gornjem Matejvcu, a verovatno i Kamenici, Dimitrije Hadži Pešić i Jovan Popović. Dolaskom prosvetnog Mithad-paše na čelo Niša, obnovljena je škola koja je izgorela 1861. U ovom periodu Mithad-pašine delatnosti, osnovana je 1865. zanatska škola koja je imala četiri razreda i 179 učenika hrišćanske i muslimanske veroispovesti. Prva gradska biblioteka se osniva 1868. opet na ideju Mithad-paše. U niškom školstvu najveći uspeh je zabeležen 1873. osnivanjem dvogodišnje gimnazije.

U ovom periodu u Niš dolaze i naseljavaju se Čerkezi i Tatari kojih je 1873. bilo oko 2000 porodica. U ne malom broju su i Arnauti koji su, služeći u turskoj vojsci kao vrlo pokretne konjičke snage, zauzeli onaj deo grada koji je u to vreme nosio naziv Arnaut pazar, a na kome se danas nalazi TC Kalča.

Među aktivnim narodnim borcima počeo je da se ističe Nikola – Kole Rašić koji je uzeo učešća u bombardovanju Beograda 1862. U ovom periodu, Kole Rašić tajno donosi knjige iz Srbije u Niš i pokretač je brojnih antiturskih aktivnosti. Pa ipak, tek 24. februara 1874. je došlo do osnivanja Komiteta za oslobođenje od Turaka čiji su ugledniji članovi bili Nikola – Kole Rašić (koji je proglašen za vođu ustanika), Todor Milovanović, Todor Stanković i ostali. Niški sveštenik Petar Ikonović je izvršio svečanu zakletvu zaverenika „da će verno i bratski raditi protiv petvekovnog krvopije“. Komitet je

radio na okupljanju ljudi, pribavljanju oružja i municije, prenošenju važnijih obaveštenja iz Beograda i prebacivanju knjiga i drugog prosvetnog materijala iz oslobođenog u neoslobođeni deo Srbije. Komitet je, po direktivi kneza Milana Obrenovića, proširio svoj uticaj sa Leskovca, Vranja, Prokuplja, Pirota i Vlasotinca na Prištinu, Peć, Prizren, Vučitrn i Gnjilane. Kada je 1875. podignut Hercegovački ustanak, a Srbiji jasno stavljeno do znanja da Austrija neće tolerisati njeno teritorijalno širenje ka zapadu, knez Milan odlučuje da vojnu aktivnost usmeri ka ideji oslobađanja Stare Srbije.

Prvi rat Srbije sa Turskom je započeo juna 1876. i pokazao svu nespremnost srpske vojske koja je na kratko osvajala, ali još brže gubila gradove istočne Srbije tako da je, nakon poraza srpske vojske kod Đunisa, 1. septembra 1876. general Černjajev tražio od kneza Milana da zatraži posredništvo ruskog cara. Tako je, posle ruskog ultimatum, turska vojska obustavila dalje operacije, pa je u februaru 1877. posle višemesečnog primirja potpisan mir, a granice su određene na osnovu principa nepromenjenog stanja pre ratnih dejstava (*Status – quo ante*). Bilo je jasno da se radilo o kupovini vremena koje je svaka strana pokušala da iskoristi što je bolje mogla.

Međutim, već u kasnu jesen 1877. srpska vlast ponovo aktivira tajne veze sa viđenijim ljudima Niša, Leskovca, Vranja, Prokuplja i Pirota, što je ukazivalo na novi rat. Zaista, 13. decembra 1877. Srbija je ponovo objavila rat Otomanskoj imperiji, a Moravski korpus, pod komandom generala Milojka Lešjanina, trebalo je da zauzme Niš. Kako su ruske snage na Plevni zapale u tešku situaciju, ruski car Aleksandar II je zatražio od kneza Milana pomoć kako bi olakšala ruskoj vojsci u njenom prelasku preko planine Balkan u rejonu Sofije.

Prokuplje je oslobođeno 18. decembra, a pala su i brojna sela u Pomoravlju (Mramor, Kočane, Pukovac, Čečina), dok su 23. decembra oslobođeni Vlasotince i Leskovac, 24. decembra Bela Palanka, a četiri dana kasnije i Pirota. Niš je, nakon bombardovanja utvrđenja na brdu Gorica, oslobođen 8. januara 1878. godine. Za svoje zasluge u nacionalnom radu i oslobodilačkom pokretu, odlikovani su sledeći članovi Komiteta: Todor Stanković (Takovski krst na prsima IV stepena), Kole Rašić (Takovski krst na prsima V stepena) i drugi.

OD OSLOBOĐENJA NIŠA DO POČETKA DRUGOG SVETSKOG RATA (1878–1941)

Neposredno po oslobođenju Niša od Turaka 9. januara 1878. godine, tek što su počeli da se uspostavljaju mehanizmi vlasti u novooslobođenim krajevima, 3. marta 1878. g. potpisan je Sanstefanski ugovor kojim je Rusija, radi svojih potreba izlaska na toplo more, želela da pripoji Niš novoosnovanoj Kneževini Bugarskoj. Reakcija iz Srbije je usledila vrlo brzo. Shvativši da Rusija neće da odustane od ovako nametnutog rešenja istočnih granica Srbije, knez Milan Obrenović i ministar spoljnih poslova Jovan Ristić se okreću Austrougarskoj koja jednako traži izlaz na toplo more, ali i mogućnost neutralisanja uticaja Srbije na dešavanja preko Drine i u Crnoj Gori. Tako su na Berlinskom kongresu (13. jun – 13. jul 1878) revidirane odluke Sanstefanskog kongresa tako da je Srbija dobila prostore u onim granicama koje je i oslobodila. Tom prilikom je 8. jula potpisana konvencija koja će biti potvrđena 1881. godine. Knez Milan je tražio od Austougarske, pored ostalog, izgradnju železničke pruge Beograd–Niš sa krakovima do Vranja i Pirota. Nakon brojnih neprilika ekonomsko-političke prirode, 4. septembra 1884. godine za Niš je krenuo prvi voz u dve kompozicije od po devet vagona, a stigao je oko 18.00 – nakon deset časova vožnje.

Već sredinom 1878. godine Niš je zahvatio veliki požar. Krovovi od suve slame planuli su na jakoj vrućini, a krajnji rezultat ovako jakog požara koji je progutao skoro celu tadašnju tzv. Pokrivenu čaršiju (potes koji je išao od Sabornog hrama i preko Obrenovićeve ulice izbijao na Trg kralja Milana) i Sinagogu, podignutu 1695, ogledao

se u izgradnji urbanističkog plana, znatnom proširenju ulica. Kamen temeljac za novu Sinagogu, koja i danas postoji, postavljen je 18. 5. 1924. g. Iste 1878. godine otvoren je veliki Saborni hram koji je izgrađen priložima bogatih trgovaca i ostalih građana od 1857. do 1872, ali je, zbog nagoveštaja skore pobeđe, sam čin puštanja u funkciju odložen na neodređeno vreme.

Nakon pobeđe nad Turcima i oslobođenja onog dela Srbije čiji je centar upravo Niš, dolazi do ubrzane prodaje zemljišnih poseda koji su bili u vlasništvu Turaka po veoma niskim cenama. Ukрупnjavanjem kapitala stvara se jaka okosnica buduće niške i srpske privrede u vidu posednika brojnih trgovačko-zanatskih radnji. Niš se pokazao spremnim za izazove koje je sobom donela sloboda, a kralj Milan Obrenović sve češće provodi vreme u svom omiljenom gradu koga vremenom počinje da tretira kao drugu prestonicu Srbije. Narodna skupština Srbije zaseda od 21. novembra 1879. i tom zasedanju je prisustvovala kneževska porodica – knez Milan, kneginja Natalija i prestolonaslednik Aleksandar Obrenović. Tom prilikom je knez Milan izrazio svoje veliko zadovoljstvo zasedanjem skupštine u „*slavnom gradu Nišu*“. Narodna skupština je zasedala u Nišu u periodu 1879–1880. i 1883–1886. godine kada je Niš zaista bio druga prestonica Srbije. Na zasedanju Narodne skupštine Srbije 13. novembra 1886. godine, održanom u zgradi prve niške Osnovne škole *Sveti Sava*, koja se nalazila u dvorištu Saborne crkve, donet je i Zakon o osnivanju Srpske kraljevske Akademije. Ovlašćenje knjaza Milana Obrenovića o osnivanju Akademije u jednom svom delu glasi:

Na predlog našeg ministra prosvete i crkvenih poslova, a po saslušanju ministarskog saveta, rešili smo i rešavamo:

Ovlašćuje se naš ministar prosvete i crkvenih poslova da podnese narodnoj skupštini, sazvanoj za 1886. godinu, predlog za osnovni zakon kraljevsko-srpske akademije.

Načelnik ministarstva prosvete i crkvenih poslova neka izvrši ovaj ukaz.

U osnivačkom aktu stoji i sledeće:

Državna vlast saslušaće svagda mišljenje akademije srpske pri davanju, pri održavanju, pri predlaganju državne pomoći

društvima lekarskim, umetničkim, tehničkim, pravničkim, učiteljskim, arheološkim, bogoslovskim ili nacionalno-prosvetnim kao i društvima za negovanje književnosti i za širenje nauke.

U Nišu se, pored skupštinskih zasedanja, organizuje i održava 1888. godine Međunarodni kongres o vinogradarstvu, a 1889. u Nišu je zasedao Sveti sinod Srpske pravoslavne crkve. Na njemu se raspravljalo o pitanjima crkvene reforme, a predsedavajući je bio mitropolit Mihailo. U ovom periodu svoje konzulate u Nišu imaju Nemačka, Turska, Engleska, Francuska, Austrougarska i Italija.

Trgovina uveliko cveta. Samo na prostoru od Kneževog dvora do Kneginjine česme (koja se nalazila na današnjem Trgu Slobode) 1882. godine braća Adrovići imali su 25 dućana u vlasništvu, Jovan Kocić 11, Mihailo Terzibašić 10, braća Adamušević i braća Jovanović po 7, Jakup Mustafić 6, Rista Bojdžić i Tasko Radojković po 5, Gavriilo Smiljanić Jovanović, Đorđe Radojković i Spira Jović po 4 dućana itd. Tako je u vlasništvu 12 lica bilo čak 93 dućana dok je na navedenom potesu ukupno bilo 293 dućana. U ovo doba Niš predstavlja veliku pijacu na kojoj se jednako prodaju kako oni proizvodi dovezeni sa Istoka, tako i oni prispeli železnicom sa Zapada. Tu ima svega: posredstvom braće Delja trgovci iz Rgotine nude brašno iz svog veštačkog mlina, radnja Nikole Hristodula trguje raznim vrstama gajtana i sukna, radnja Panajota Delje prodaje prvoklasnu kožarsku robu iz Austrougarske i Turske, Đorđe Janković nudi zlatom vezene tkanine za jorgane i papuče, košulje, miris od ruža, broševe, muštikle, medaljone, mašice za cigare „i drugu carigradsku robu“. Trgovine braće Popić i braće Manojlović su se specijalizovale za prodaju na veliko manufakturne robe, ćilima i galanterije dok se, na drugim mestima, prodaju po specijalizovanim radnjama gvožđe, porculan, staklo, hartija, koža, odeća, optički proizvodi ili kovački pribor.

Uviđajući velike mogućnosti za industrijski razvoj, Jovan Apel, koji je imao ručnu pivaru u Aleksincu, kupio je šest hektara zemlje i 1884. godine sagradio pivaru. Već 1886. godine Mita Ristić je osnovao radionicu za preradu pamuka koja će kasnije prerasti u fabriku tekstila *Mitić i sin*, a nakon Drugog svetskog rata poznata je kao *NITEX*.

Sve ubrzaniji razvoj Niša imao je za posledicu osnivanje prvih štedionica. Tako je grupa niških uglednih trgovaca osnovala 25. novembra 1884. godine Nišku akcionarsku štedionicu. Ovaj novčani zavod nije dobio svoje ime slučajno. U želji da iskoriste dobar glas tadašnjih okružnih štedionica, osnivači daju ovaj naziv, iako je ova bila akcionarska banka sa uplaćenim kapitalom preko prodaje vlastitih akcija. Predsednik upravnog odbora bio je Atila Okoličanji (inače farmaceut), a članovi su bili: Đoka S. Nešić, ugledni niški trgovac, A. Harmijadis, Dim. Nikolić, Ilija Miletić, Dimitrije J. Kocić, Karlo Materni, Nikola J. Jarendi, Stefan T. Hristodulo, A. Pečaković i Mihailo H. Nešić. Predsednik upravnog odbora je 1888. bio Đoka S. Nešić. Niška akcionarska štedionica počinje da odvaja sredstva za osnivanje pamučne predionice i već 1910. godine, na sednici Narodne skupštine Srbije, „pročitao je referat Industrijske sekcije po molbi Niške akcionarske štedionice, koja moli da joj se izdejstvuje povlastica za predenje sirovog pamuka i tkanje raznih pamučnih tkanina i platna“. Na istoj sednici je odlučeno da se zahtevu treba delimično udovoljiti „a traženo zemljište se može ustupiti besplatno samo ako ga bude bilo“. Tako je Predionica pamuka počela da radi, kao prva u Srbiji, pod rukovodstvom A. Abenšoama, inače člana upravnog odbora Štedionice, koji je postavljen za nadzornika Fabrike. Predionica je radila relativno dobro, uglavnom ulažući „u građevinske objekte i mašine tako da je njihova vrednost, samo 1913. godine, povećana za 6165 dinara“, a pred početak Prvog svetskog rata Predionica je zapošljavala preko 100 radnika, imala je 6000 vretena i proizvodila je godišnje oko 50000 paketa engleskog pamuka od po 10 funti.

Treba napomenuti da se oko Niške akcionarske štedionice okupljaju i prvi niški masoni koji će 1892. godine oformiti u Nišu ložu *Nemanja*, čiji je prvi starešina bio Đoka S. Nešić. Od istaknutijih članova, vezanih za Nišku akcionarsku štedionicu, u *Nemanji* su bili Karlo Materni, Spira Kalik i Stevan Sremac. Nakon Niške akcionarske štedionice, 1888. godine osnovana je Niška zadruga za međusobno pomaganje i štednju, a naredne 1889. i Srpsko-jevrejska

trgovačka zadruga. U narednim godinama biće osnovane Niška trgovinska i prometna banka (1891), a sa početkom 20. stoleća Niška banka (1904).

Da bi što brže došle do kapitala i obezbedile svojim akcionarima što veću dividendu, neke niške banke, pored svojih redovnih, bankarskih poslova obavljale su i privredne poslove, a najunosniji je bio trgovina. Tako je Niška trgovinska i prometna banka 1893. godine nudila iz svojih poduma kvalitetno, očuvano i čisto jednogodišnje belo niško i vranjansko vino. U pojedinim slučajevima se i preterivalo, a najtipičniji primer je Niška banka kojoj je Ministarstvo narodne privrede odbilo da 1902. godine izda odobrenje za osnivanje sa obrazloženjem da u Nišu postoje već četiri novčana zavoda. Dodatna otežavajuća okolnost za osnivanje ove banke ležala je i u tome što je banka, prema zamisli akcionara, trebalo da obavlja čak petnaest vrsta različitih poslova.

Kada se ima u vidu da je odnos Nišlija prema kralju Milanu Obrenoviću i njegovom sinu Aleksandru bio neuobičajeno prisan za odnos vladar–podanik, onda je vrlo teško zamisliti reakciju stanovnika Niša na vest o smrti kraljevskog para Aleksandra i Drage Mašin. Većina Nišlija, ogorčena ovim činom, odbijala je da skinе crne zastave koje su povešali na kapijama ili iznad ulaznih vrata prodavnica. Već krajem maja 1903. u Niš je došao kralj Petar I Karađorđević i ličnim zalaganjem uspeo da spreči dalju napetost na jugu Srbije.

Jedna dinastija je otišla, druga došla, a život se nastavio.

Srpsko-jevrejska trgovačka zadruga je 1909. godine nabavila mašine i osnovala Električnu stolarsku fabriku koja će do Balkanskih ratova (1912) imati uplaćeni kapital u visini od 150000 dinara, dok je vrednost Električne stolarske fabrike i agenturskog odeljenja Srpsko-jevrejske trgovačke zadruge iznosila 279520 dinara. Kao i svi ostali novčani zavodi, Srpsko-jevrejska trgovačka zadruga je teško stradala za vreme Prvog svetskog rata, da bi otišla u likvidaciju 1921. godine.

Postoji još nekoliko primera ulaganja niških novčanih zavoda u privredu sa osnivnim zadatkom povećavanja dividende svojih akcionara – Niška zadruga za međusobno pomaganje i štednju podigla je

Fabniku belih cigala i keramičkih pločica, a Niška banka osnovala je 1910. godine Fabniku koža.

Zahvaljujući prugama koje počinju zrakasto od Niša da idu do Rumunije i Bugarske, počinje ubrzani razvoj izvoznih kapaciteta niške i srpske privrede. Niški trgovci su naročito usmereni na dva tržišta – solunsko i denovljansko, naročito kada počne da dolazi do sve izraženijih srpsko-bugarskih tenzija. U vreme carinskog rata (1906) sa Austrougarskom umesto da dođe do očekivanog gašenja srpske privrede, u Nišu se događa sasvim suprotna stvar. Potisnuvši proizvode koji su dolazili iz Dvojne monarhije, pritom čineći 2/3 proizvoda na niškom tržištu, stvoren je prostor za sopstvena ulaganja što je više nego dobro iskorišćeno osnivanjem devet većih ili manjih preduzeća Tako se najpre osniva 1906. godine Hidrocentrala *Sveta Petka* u Sićevačkoj klisuri sa dva generatora instalirane snage do 250 kilovata. To je bila osnovica za otvaranje novih preuzeća – 1907. Fabrika obuće Vladimira Dimitrijevića, 1908. Fabrika za tkanje i štampanje šamija i marama Mite Ristića, 1909. Prva srpska fabrika sirišta u prahu i tečnosti Đoke Dimitrijevića i Električna stolarska zadruga Srpsko-jevrejske trgovačke zadruge, 1910. Mita Ristić gradi tkačnicu sa 200 razboja. Iste godine osnovana je i Fabrika kudjelje Jovanovića i Arandelovića, dok Niška akcionarska štedionica osniva Predionicu pamuka i Električni mlin. U cilju povećanja proizvodnje piva, 1910. godine je 25 imućnijih građana kupilo pivaru Jovana Apela i osnovalo Pivarsko društvo *Apelovac*, a u narednim godinama nastaju: Cigлана i Automatski mlin Okružne banke (1911), Fabrika tašni i kofera Držajića i Šurdilovića, Parni automatski mlin Nikole Cvetkovića i sinova, podiže se nova ciglana Jovanovića, Živkovića i Popovića (1912).

Kao kruna svega 1911. godine osnovano je Udruženje niških industrijalaca čiji je prvi predsednik bio Petar Stanković. U Solun počinju da se izvoze niško pivo i brašno iz parnog mlina *Konstantin* braće Popović, dok je Automatski mlin okružne banke izvezio brašno u Tursku.

Demografski sastav stanovništva je u periodu od 1878–1890. bio izuzetno mešovito, dok se u poslednjoj deceniji 19. stoleća beleži ubrzan porast stanovništva.

Godina popisa	Gradsko stanovništvo	Seosko stanovništvo	UKUPNO
1878.	12801	23927	36728
1884.	16178	22689	38867
1890.	19877	31439	51316

Od nesrpskog stanovništva zabeleženo je prisustvo Jevreja, Cincara, Nemaca, Roma, Italijana, Turaka, Mađara, Francuza i ostalih. Na Vinterovom planu Niša jasno je uočljiva jevrejska, ali i nekoliko cincarskih mahala u kojima su bile u prvo vreme nakon oslobođenja smeštene škole. Ukoliko se izuzme Jevrejska škola koja je radila izdvojena od ostale gradske celine i čija nastava je bila usmerena prema potrebama jevrejske opštine, u Nišu nakon oslobođenja i u prvoj deceniji 20. stoleća raste broj novih osnovnih i srednjih škola.

U ovom periodu u Nišu živi i stvara svoja najbolja dela Stevan Sremac, autor poznatih dela *Zona Zamfirova* i *Ivkova slava* i jedan od osnivača prvog niškog pozorišta *Sinđelić*, oformljenog 1883. godine. Za njegovu ličnost je vezano i otvaranje Gradske biblioteke koja je osnovana 1879. godine u kojoj je radio u prvo vreme. U ovo vreme stvaraju slikari Đorđe Krstić, Moša Šoamović i Stevan Nišić Lala. Književni život grada obogaćen je 1899. godine osnovanjem književnog lista *GRADINA* čiji je prvi urednik bio Jeremija Živanović.

Politički život Niša je bio jednako bogat kao i kulturni ili privredni, iako je bitno kasnio u odnosu na politički život Srbije do 1878. godine. Imajući u vidu da je zaslugom dinastije Obrenović Niš do 1903. zaista bio druga prestonica Srbije u kojoj je, kao što smo videli, zasedala Narodna skupština Srbije, zbog čega je Niš smatran uporištem Liberalne stranke Jovana Ristića (koja je podržavala politiku dinastije) čiji su članovi u Nišu bili Stevan Sremac, Živan Živanović, Todor Stanković i drugi. Posle Timočke bune (1883) i srpsko-bugarskog rata (1885) uticaj Radikalne stranke u Nišu i Srbiji opada, ali ne zadugo. Proglašavanjem novog Ustava i abdikacijom kralja Milana 22. februara 1889. u korist maloletnog sina Aleksandra Obrenovića formira se namesništvo koje je upravo radikalima

naložilo formiranje nove vlade. Sve do atentata na Aleksandra Obrenovića i Dragu Mašin 1903. godine, srpski dvor je bio centar iz koga je delovala Liberalna stranka što se reflektovalo i na Niš, ali će stvari bitnije promeniti na prvim narednim izborima organizovanim pod kraljem Petrom I Karađorđevićem. U Nišu se pojavljuju još dve značajne stranke – samostalni radikali i socijalisti, tako da su na skupštinskim izborima 1908. najviše glasova dobili radikali, potom samostalni radikali, liberali i socijalisti, dok je na poslednjim izborima 1912. pred balkanske i Prvi svetski rat došlo do sledećeg redosleda: liberali, radikali, socijalisti i samostalni radikali.

PRVI SVETSKI RAT

Nakon balkanskih ratova koji se nisu bitnije odrazili na život u Nišu, došlo je i do Prvog svetskog rata kada se Vlada Srbije i Narodna skupština, zbog blizine neposredne opasnosti, seli u Niš jula 1914. Švajcarkinja Katarina Klara Šturceneger beleži porast stanovništva u Nišu usled bombardovanja Beograda – Niš, koji je pre rata imao oko 30000 stanovnika, avgusta 1914. je beležio 80000 stanovnika. Niš je bio ratna prestonica Srbije do oktobra 1915. i u tih godinu dana boravka Vlade Srbije i Narodne skupštine u Nišu borave poznati srpski naučnici Jovan Cvijić, Aleksandar Belić, Jovan Banjanin i drugi na poziv predsednika Vlade Nikole Pašića. Oni su svojim radom doprineli da se prihvati ideja jugoslovenstva koja je promovisana na skupu u zgradi Oficirskog doma 6. maja 1915. kojim je predsedavao knjiženik Ivo Čipiko. Ovom prilikom je doneta *Jugoslovenska deklaracija* koja će biti osnova za kasniju Krfsku deklaraciju (1917).

Niš je pogodila epidemija trbušnog tifusa koja je vladala te godine Srbijom i prepolovila stanovništvo. Vlada Srbije i Narodna skupština su napustile Niš na vest da je Bugarska ušla u rat protiv Srbije (6. oktobra 1915). Bugarska vojska je 23. oktobra 1915. zauzela Niš i držala ga do 12. oktobra 1918. godine kada je u njega ušla srpska vojska pod vođstvom vojvode Petra Bojovića. Za vreme bugarske vlasti izbio je poznati Toplički ustanak marta 1917. u predelu

Prokuplja, Kuršumlje i Leskovca pod vođstvom Koste Vojinovića, a ustanici su stizali do Niša. Toplički ustanak, koji je ugušen u krvi novembra 1917. godine, predstavlja jedan od svetlijih istorijskih događaja vezanih za ovaj kraj.

STVARANJE KRALJEVINE JUGOSLAVIJE

U periodu od oktobra do decembra 1918. poražene teritorije koje su bile pod Austrougarskom (Slovenija, Bosna sa Hercegovinom, Hrvatska i Vojvodina) izjasnile su se da, padom moćne carevine, žele da postanu deo federativne zajednice u kojoj bi bila Kraljevina Srbija. Tako je 1. decembra 1918. proglašena Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca koja je nakon par godina dobila univerzalnije ime Kraljevina Jugoslavija. Prema popisu iz 1921. godine, na površini od 248666 kilometara kvadratnih živelo je 11984919 stanovnika od kojih je bilo oko dva miliona pripadnika nacionalnih manjina: Nemaca, Mađara, Albanaca, Slovaka, Rumuna, Rusina, Poljaka i drugih.

Po ko zna koji put u svojoj istoriji Niš je bio do te mere razrušen da ga je trebalo dizati ponovo iz temelja. Železnička stanica i veće fabrike u Nišu bile su u većoj meri porušene, a na sličan način je unazađena trgovina, zanatstvo, a usled vremenskih nepogoda i poljoprivreda. Međutim, niška privreda počinje da se vraća u stanje pre rata već 1919, a među prvim fabrikama su Mašinska radionica Dragomira Pejića, Fabrika obuće Vlade Dimitrijevića i električni mlin Niške akcionarske radionice. U periodu od 1919. do 1924. obnovila su rad sva veća industrijska preduzeća i započet rad novih dvadesetak. Prema prvom popisu stanovništva Kraljevine Jugoslavije, Niš je 1921. imao 25109 stanovnika, skoro isto kao i 1910. godine, što dovoljno govori kolike su bile žrtve koje je Niš sa okolinom podneo u dva Balkanska i Prvom svetskom ratu.

Do 1919. na mestu predsednika opštine bio je Petar Stanković, koji je tu dužnost vršio i za vreme rata, a nakon njega je na ovom mestu od 5. januara 1920. bio Sotir Zdravković. On je bio na čelu opštine kada su raspisani prvi opštinski izbori 22. avgusta 1920. koji

su, zbog izvesnih nepravilnosti, ponovljeni 24. oktobra 1920. godine. Od 36 mesta za odbornike, kandidati Komunističke partije Jugoslavije (KPJ) su uzeli 24, a Pavle Stojković izabran je za prvog predsednika Opštine u Kraljevini Jugoslaviji. Ova vlast je funkionisala veoma kratko, do juna 1921. kada je državna vlast raspustila vlast u niškoj „crvenoj“ opštini dok su novi izbori raspisani za 25. septembra 1921. KPJ nije mogla da učestvuje na ovim izborima jer je u međuvremenu zabranjen njen javni rad dokumentom *Obznana*, a vlast u Nišu su podelile Demokratska i Radikalna stranka. U parlamentarnom životu Niša 1923. godine se pojavljuju dve značajne ličnosti koje će obeležiti politički život Niša i Srbije u narednom periodu. Radi se o Nikoli Uzunoviću koji je 1923. bio narodni poslanik i ministar građevina u vladi Kraljevine SHS i Dragiši Cvetkoviću, predsedniku niške opštine i kasnijem predsedniku Vlade Kraljevine Jugoslavije. Do početka Drugog svetskog rata, ova dvojica niških radikala će svojim međusobnim rivalitetom, kao i obećanjem da će se Niš „odvojiti kao administrativno slobodan grad i da neće plaćati tolike poreze“ (Uzunović) bitno obeležiti nišku međuratnu političku scenu.

U ovom periodu pojavljuju se dnevni listovi *Napredak*, *Nova zora*, *Privredni list*, *Niški glasnik*, a već od novembra 1918. u kafani *Ruski car* prikazivane su predstave *Zona Zamfirova* Stevana Sremca i *Koštana* Bore Stankovića. Osniva se 1923. Niško jevrejsko glumačko društvo *Maks Nardec*. Gostuju i operetske družine iz Sarajeva (1923. i 1925) i Subotice (1922. i 1924). Već od 1919. u Nišu je svoju delatnost obnovilo radničko amatersko društvo *Abrašević* negujući muzičko-vokalnu i scensku umetnost. Osnivaju se Jevrejsko-srpsko pevačko društvo *David*, Crkvena pevačka družina *Branko*, Katoličko pevačko društvo *Zvezda* i druga. Od slikara, u Nišu izlažu Dušan Janković i Vasilije Rudanovski, akademski slikari i školovani grafičari.

Naročiti razvoj grada uočava se u periodu od 1925. do 1930. godine kada se od niških privrednih giganata izdvajaju Fabrika duvana i Fabrika tekstila Mita Ristić i sinovi. U ovom periodu u Nišu postoji jedanaest banaka, ali se uočava porast konkurencije i sve teža prodaja proizvoda. U uslovima ekonomske krize i porasta opšteg nezadovoljstva, Niš 1931. broji 35465 stanovnika, ali već dolazi do

sve težeg zapošljavanja ljudi. Zanati i zemljoradnja, koji su odavno u nezavidnoj situaciji, sve očiglednije propadaju, dok su radničke demonstracije sve češće. U ovom periodu Niš je po cenama najskuplji, dok je stanovništvo porezima najopterećenije u celoj Kraljevini Jugoslaviji. Dolazi do stvaranja radničkog pokreta i omasovljavanja KPJ sa jedne i destruktivnog delovanja pojedinih partija sa druge strane do te mere da je kralj Aleksandar I Karađorđević 6. januara 1929. uveo tzv. Šestojanuarsku diktaturu kojom je zabranjen rad svim političkim strankama.

Vojni sveštenik dr Bruno Lovrić objavio je 1927. godine delo pod nazivom *Istorija Niša* koje je u velikoj meri uticalo na dalji razvoj lokalne istorije. Iste godine su objavljene knjige *Toplički ustanak* i *Kamenički boj* Živka Randelovića.

U periodu od 1929. do 1939. u Nišu je živelo oko 40000 stanovnika od kojih su većinski deo činili Srbi, pored kojih su, u znatno manjem broju, živeli Slovenci, Hrvati, Romi, Jevreji, Grci i Cincari. Naročito od 1935. Niš dobija na poletu, razvija se tako da je zabeleženo da su u periodu 1936–1941. u gradu postojale čak 82 privatne pekare. U ovom periodu Nikola Cvetković je već predsednik Vlade Kraljevine Jugoslavije. Juna 1937. Niš je proslavio 60 godina od oslobođenja od Turaka i tim povodom je bio raspisan konkurs za idejno rešenje spomenika koji bi bio postavljen u najstrožem centru grada. Usvojeno je idejno rešenje Augustina Augustinčića koje je otkriveno 28. juna u prisustvu kako visokih zvanica, tako i potomaka članova Komiteta za oslobođenje Niša od Turaka – potomci sveštenika Petra Ikonovića, Koleta Rašića i drugih bili su smešteni u prvim redovima. Spomenik je otkrio knez namesnik Pavle Karađorđević.

Pre ove svečanosti, 27. juna 1937. godine, u prisustvu poznatog dramskog umetnika Raše Plaovića, udareni su temelji Narodnog pozorišta i Državne trgovačke akademije. Pored toga što je podizanje spomenika bilo centralni deo proslave, za Niš je bilo bitno dobijanje novog vodovoda koji je 27. juna pušten u rad, čime su iskorenjene one infektivne bolesti koje su dolazile preko nezdrave vode. Ovom prilikom su otpočeli dogovori oko završetka radova na izgradnji modernog hirurškog paviljona niške bolnice do kraja te 1937. godine.

U ovom periodu (krajem 1936. i početkom 1937) u Nišu je postojalo i radilo 157 kulturno-umetničkih društava.

Na konkursu koji je ovim povodom raspisan za rad o istoriji Niša, žiri je otkupio delo *Spomenica Niša 1877–1937*, autora Mihajla Ristića, profesora Učiteljske škole u Jagodini. Ove godine je objavljeno još jedno delo u kome se autor bavio proučavanjem istorije Niša – novinar Mihailo Paligorić napisao je *Ekonomsko-kulturnu istoriju Niša*, delo koje je, pored Lovrićeve i Ristićeve knjige, postalo dugo-godišnja nezaobilazna literatura kasnijih istraživača.

Septembra iste (1937) godine, kao posebno odeljenje niškog Narodnog pozorišta, osnovana je Niška opereta, koja je kao takva postojala do maja 1939. godine kada je ukinuta odlukom Uprave Narodnog pozorišta Moravske banovine. Sa gašenjem operete započinju ozbiljna razmatranja ideje o osnivanju opere u Nišu. Realizaciju ove zamisli prekinuo je početak Drugog svetskog rata. Već januara 1939. u novosagrađenoj zgradi Narodnog pozorišta (završenoj decembra 1938. godine) premijerno je igran komad Milorada Šapčanina *Zadubina*.

U predvečerje, tokom Drugog svetskog rata, 17. decembra 1939. podignut je spomenik kralju Aleksandru I Karađorđeviću na trgu, nedaleko od zgrade današnjeg Pravnog fakulteta. Otkrivanju spomenika prisustvovao je veliki broj zvanica. Ovaj spomenik, pravo remek-delo spomeničke kulture, tenkom su iščupale i oborile sovjetske i partizanske vojne jedinice neposredno po ulasku u Niš, oktobra 1944. godine.

Zaštita od mogućeg napada iz vazduha postala je više nego neophodna u vremenu nastupajuće militantne politike Nemačke, Italije, ali i okolnih zemalja. Stoga je 5. 11. 1933. održana prva vežba o zaštiti grada od napada iz vazduha. Sa zaoštavanjem političke situacije u Evropi, pitanje odbrane grada se intenzivira, tako da je je Službeni list Moravske banovine 13. maja 1939. objavio Uredbu o zaštiti od napada iz vazduha. Preduzeća, bolnice, škole, vojne jedinice, železničke stanice i ostali javni objekti u obavezi su da grade skloništa od bombardovanja. Od jeseni 1939. godine počinju sistematska isključenja struje radi simulacije odbrane od „neprijateljskih“ aviona, a već

početkom februara 1940. u određeno vreme su isprobavane sirene za objavljivanje uzbune. Građani Jugoslavije, Srbije i Niša bili su u prilici da se preko štampe i radio-uređaja obaveštavaju o neprekidnim bombardovanjima Londona i ne sluteći da će upravo Kraljevina Jugoslavija biti skora žrtva politike Engleske.

Javni život postaje preopterećen sve bližom pojavom fašizma i nacizma, što dodatno stvara napetost – dok pripadnici KPJ i SKOJ-a demonstriraju protiv Hitlera i Nemačke, a za savez sa Sovjetskim Savezom, vlast pokušava da uguši ovu vrstu protesta. Namesnik knez Pavle Karađorđević postiže sporazum sa kancelarom Nemačke Adolfom Hitlerom koji podrazumeva da će Kraljevina Jugoslavija dati Nemačkoj ono što joj je potrebno za njoj neophodni prolaz do Grčke a da zauzvrat Nemačka garantuje Kraljevini Jugoslaviji potpunu samostalnost i nepromenjeno stanje u njenim granicama i unutrašnjem uređenju. Kada su Dragiša Cvetković, kao predsednik Vlade Kraljevine Jugoslavije i Alekandar Cincar Marković, u svojstvu ministra inostranih poslova, potpisali u Beču 25. 3. 1941. Protokol o pristupanju Jugoslavije Trojnom paktu, a na osnovu prethodno utvrđenog dogovora Kneza Pavla i Hitlera, britanska obaveštajna služba je inicirala proteste u Beogradu koje je zvanično povelala KPJ. Otvaranje ovog potencijalnog fronta na Balkanu znatno je samnjilo pritisak Nemačke na Englesku i dalo vremena britanskoj vladi da se konsoliduje. Koliko je nešto poput demonstracija od 27. marta 1941. Engleskoj i Londonu bilo više nego neophodno, toliko je bilo nepotrebno Srbiji.

Na Hitlerovu osvetu nije se dugo čekalo. Već 6. 4. 1941. u rano jutro nemački avioni su bombardovali Beograd, dok su 8. aprila sa aerodroma iz susedne Bugarske nemački avioni uzleteli i teško bombardovali Niš, u koji su 9. 4. ušle jedinice 12. armije pod komandom feldmaršala Lista. Polusrušen od bombardovanja nemačke avijacije i sa oko 400 mrtvih i preko 500 ranjenih, Niš je bio okupiran.

PERIOD OD 1941–1990.

Odmah po osvojenju Niša, da bi pokazao ozbiljne namere, okupator je izvršio hapšenje nekoliko desetina stanovnika Niša koji su bili zatvoreni u Tvrđavi nekoliko dana, a potom pušteni na slobodu. Nastupila je besomučna pljačka najpre jevrejskih trgovaca, a potom svih Jevreja u gradu.

Naredbom vojnoupravnog komandanta Srbije od 28. 4. 1941. uspostavljena je Feldkomandantura 809 – Niš, centralni organ nemačke uprave za jug Srbije, na čijem čelu se nalazio pukovnik Karl Frajher fon Botmer. Ova Feldkomandantura imala je neograničena ovlašćenja u vezi sa sprovođenjem „čišćenja“ okupiranih zona od građana proglašanih za građane druge vrste – Jevrejima i Ciganima. Već 7. juna 1941. godine Banska uprava Moravske banovine, po naređenju Feldkomandanture 809, upućuje svim sreskim načelnicima, predsednicima gradskih poglavarstava, kao i upravniku policije u Nišu dokument u kome se naređuje *„da do 15. juna ove god. neizostavno svi predsednici opština sa Vašeg područja pribave i nadležnoj Krajskomandanturi mesta dostave sledeći spisak: 1. Loža slobodnih zidara, 2. Jevrejskih veroispovednih opština, 3. Sinagoga, 4. Ostalih jevrejskih organizacija, 5. Vodećih ličnosti među Jevrejima, 6. Svih jevrejskih radnji (fabrika, preduzeća) i 7. Ostalih Jevreja.*

Prelomni trenutak u odnosima okupatora prema stanovništvu Srbije i Niša bio je napad Nemačke na Sovjetski Savez 22. 6. 1941. koji je uslovio dizanje ustanka u Srbiji 7. 7. 1941. godine. Komunistička partija Jugoslavije, koja je do tada organizovala manje diverzije po gradovima, podigla je ustanak u Srbiji tako da je Feldkomandantura za Niš već krajem avgusta 1941. bila u prilici da pooštri režim u svo-

joj okupacionoj zoni. Ovome je u mnogome doprineo događaj od 3. 8. 1941. kada je pripadnik komunističkog pokreta Aleksandar Vojinović izvršio atentat na nemačke vojnike i oficire u hotelu *Park*, bacivši bombu u salu. Razbesnili Nemci su te i narednih noći izvršili veliki broj hapšenja, dok je pukovnik Fon Botmer tražio iz Beograda instrukcije za dalji rad.

Septembra 1941. počinje se sa izgradnjom logora nedaleko od železničke stanice Crveni krst, po kojoj će dobiti paradoksalno ime – Logor na Crvenom krstu, a već oktobra se u njega dopremaju ljudi iz okolnih mesta. Oktobra 1941. godine su svi Jevreji iz Niša i okoline bili u logoru, rame uz rame sa ne malim brojem Roma, uhvaćenih simpatizera Norodnooslobodilačkog pokreta (NOP), ali još uvek nije bilo fizičke likvidacije stanovništva.

Kao odmazda za dejstva antifašističkih jedinica, nemačka okupaciona vlast uspostavlja pravilo koje je jedino važno u Srbiji – za jednog ranjenog vojnika Vermahta biće streljano 50, a za ubijenog oficira – 100 talaca. Nemci su ovu kaznu sproveli u delo krajem oktobra 1941. u Kragujevcu i Kraljevu gde je streljano više od 10000 ljudi. Razbijanje Užičke republike i masovna streljanja u navedenim gradovima stvorila su vrlo nepovoljnu situaciju za pokret otpora. Kao i u drugim mestima, u niški logor na Crvenom krstu sve češće su dovođeni uhvaćeni pripadnici pokreta otpora.

U logoru ni početkom 1942. nema streljanja. Tek kada se proširi vest da se sprema streljanje uhvaćenih partizana iz Kopaoničkog odreda i sudbina njih 150 postane izvesna, osuđenici na smrt dogovaraju bekstvo koje im, u dva navrata, biva pomučeno potkazivanjem drugih logoraša. Tako će treći put, shvativši da su ponovno izdani, umesto ka kapiji, njih 147 krenuti ka žicama logora pod vođstvom studenta Branka Bjegovića. To je ujedno i prvo bekstvo logoraša iz nekog logora Trećeg rajha. Krajnji saldo će pokazati da je njih 42 poginulo u logoru i na žici, dok je 105 pobešlo preko žice.

Nemci su brzo reagovali, tako da su pet dana kasnije, 17. februara 1942. godine, izvršili masovno streljanje na Bubnju. U tom streljanju ubijeno je oko 1000 logoraša, uglavnom Jevreja i komunisti. U osvetničkoj atmosferi bugarski okupatori, koji su zaposeli pet

okruža, čine takva zverstva da je predsednik Vlade Milan Nedić prinuđen da reaguje i traži zaštitu srpskog življa na ovim prostorima. Među okupatorima je sve manje razumevanja za ono što podrazumeva bilo kakvu vrstu pristojnog života. Pretpostavlja se da je od februara 1942. do oktobra 1944. kroz kapije logora prošlo oko 30000 ljudi, a da je više hiljada streljano na Bubnju.

Partizanski odredi u okolini Niša vrlo često su prinuđeni na povlačenje, naročito od februara 1942. do juna 1943. godine, kada su česta hapšenja ljudi za koje se smatralo da pomažu partizanski pokret. Pored velikog broja komunističkih organizacija čiji su članovi pohvatani i najčešće streljani na Bubnju, dodatni teret su predstavljale izuzetno niske temperature. U ovom periodu pojavljuje se još jedan problem kome se, sasvim sigurno, niko od stanovnika Niša nije mogao nadati – američka i engleska bombardovanja Niša i to u nekoliko navrata. Sva saveznička bombardovanja (20. 10. 1943, 13. 3. 1944, 30. 3. 1944, 5. 4. 1944) kao po pravilu su odnosila više žrtava među građanima Niša, nego među okupatorima. Sve u svemu, zabeleženo je da je u toku Drugog svetskog rata Niš pretrpeo 57 rušilačkih naleta savezničke avijacije.

Uspesima saveznika na drugim frontovima tokom 1943. i 1944. godine, a naročito prelaskom Bugarske na stranu saveznika, oslobodilački pokret u Nišu i okolini je naglo ojačao. U periodu od maja do oktobra 1944. izvršene su sve vojne pripreme oko zazimanja Niša, jedne od glavnijih raskrsnica Balkana. Tako je Niš, posle višednevnih borbi sovjetsko-bugarskih i antifašističkih jedinica sa čvrstom nemačkom odbranom, oslobođen 14. 10. 1944. godine.

Sve što je predstavljalo industriju Niša, a toga nije bilo malo, bilo je trajno neupotrebljivo po oslobođenju grada. Tešku havariju je pretrpela i hidrocentrala Sv. Petka u Sićevu, zgrade Narodnog pozorišta, Narodnog muzeja, Hipotekarne banke (danas zgrada Pošte br. 1) i mnoge druge. U odnosu na periodu pre rata, Niš je dočekao 1945. sa 20% uništenih kuća i čak 29% manje stanovništva.

OBNOVA

Uporedo sa prvim koracima u obnavljanju teško razrušene privrede, nova vlast je interventno rešavala pitanja smeštaja i dalje edukacije ratne siročadi, kao i borbe protiv tuberkuloze. Na prvim izborima za Ustavotvornu skupštinu od 11. 11. 1945. godine u Nišu je glasalo 91% stanovništva, pri čemu je lista Narodnog fronta (odnosno lista KPJ i Josipa Broza Tita) dobila 81,63% glasova, a nosilac liste za Niš Koča Popović, čovek pod čijim je rukovodstvom oslobođen Niš, bio prvi narodni poslanik iz redova KPJ koga je Niš izglasao. Ovi izbori će ostati upamćeni po „ćoravim kutijama“, celom sistemu izborne krađe, koji je uspostavila nova vlast u cilju ostvarivanja što boljih rezultata.

Do 1. maja 1946. funkcionisali su preki vojni sudovi koji su sudili licima za koje se smatralo da su počinila neki od ratnih zločina. Kao i svaka revolucionarna vlast i ova je u svojim odlukama imala neizbežnu dozu ostrašćenosti koja je rezultovala pogrešnim presudama i velikim brojem žrtava.

Posle izvršene nacionalizacije iz 1946. i 1948. godine, privatni sektor je ostao samo u oblasti poljoprivrede i zanatstva. Tako je do 1950. čak 7 privatnih predratnih tekstilnih preduzeća nacionalizacijom objedinjeno u Industriju za preradu pamuka *Ratko Pavlović*, kasnije poznatiju kao Niška industrija tekstila (*NITEX*), dok je Fabrika kože i gumenih proizvoda *Đuka Dinić* na isti način u sebi objedinila čak 10 preduzeća. Pored navedenih preduzeća, vremenom zaštitni znak Niša postaju Fabrika duvana Niš (kasnije *DIN*) i Mostovska radionica, kasnije Mašinska industrija Niš (*MIN*).

Rezolucija Informbiroa (1948) je prinudila Vladu FNRJ da počne sa oslanjanjem na domaće izvore što je podrazumevalo ubrzano obnavljanje privrede. Sa druge strane, dotadašnji administrativni način upravljanja 1950. je zamenjen sistemom radničkog samoupravljanja. U periodu do 1955. potpuno su stavljene u funkciju i obnovljene sledeće institucije:

Zdravstvene: Vojna i Državna bolnica, Psihijatrijska bolnica u Gornjoj Toponici, Sanatorijum u Knez Selu, Dom zdravlja, Pasterov zavod i Zavod za medicinu rada.

Kulturne: Narodno pozorište, Pozorište lutaka, Narodna biblioteka, Narodni muzej, Istorijski arhiv, Gradski simfonijski orkestar, Preduzeće za prikazivanje filmova *Slavica* i Narodne novine.

Školske: veliki broj osnovnih i srednjih škola (gimnazije i srednje stručne).

Održavaju se takmičenja u atletici, boksu, fudbalu, gimnastici, kajaku, košarci, odbojci, rukometu, tenisu, smušanju i šahu. Iz većine navedenih sportova Niš će u narednom periodu dati više državnih reprezentativaca.

U narednim decenijama Niš ubrzano razvija industriju i poljoprivredu. Ustavom iz 1963. pod Skupštinu opštinu Niš potpada tridesetak okolnih sela, što je trebalo da rezultuje jačanjem sela, poljoprivrede i stočarstva. Industrijska proizvodnja se tokom šezdesetih i sedamdesetih godina zahuktava, grad jača, a sve se to ogleda u otvaranju Univerziteta u Nišu. Prvi fakulteti koji su osnovani u Nišu 1960. (Medicinski, Pravno-ekonomski i Tehnički) pet godina od svog osnivanja nalazili su se u sastavu Univerziteta u Beogradu. Osnivanjem Univerziteta u Nišu 1965. ovi fakulteti, zajedno sa novooosnovanim Elektronskim i Filozofskim, bivaju prebačeni pod niški Univerzitet. Do 1971. izvršena je podela Tehničkog fakulteta na Mašinski i Građevinski, dok su deobom Pravno-ekonomskog nastali Pravni i Ekonomski fakultet, tako da je Univerzitet u Nišu ove godine imao sedam fakulteta u svom sastavu. Do kraja sedamdesetih godina većina navedenih fakulteta će imati pored osnovnih i postdiplomske studije.

Razvoj Univerziteta je zahtevao posebne uslove i prateće ustanove, tako da je 1967. osnovana Univerzitetska biblioteka za potrebe nastavnog kadra i studenata Univerziteta. Tako Niš postaje pored industrijskih, jedan od prosvetnih centara Jugoslavije koji je 1971. godine imao 127654 stanovnika.

U ovom periodu svoj puni procvat doživljava Niška banja, poznato lečilište još iz doba Rimskog carstva. Lekovitost i specifičnost

joj daju radonske termomineralne vode i prirodan mineralni peloid. Lečenje se obavlja na Institutu za prevenciju, lečenje i rehabilitaciju reumatičkih i kardiovaskularnih bolesti *Niška Banja*, koji predstavlja savremenu zdravstveno-naučnu israživačku ustanovu iz oblasti reumatologije i kardiologije, specijalizovane rehabilitacije, fizikalne medicine, ortopedije. Institut poseduje savremenu opremu za neinvazivnu dijagnostiku, lečenje i rehabilitaciju reumatičnih i kardiovaskularnih bolesti, kao i savremenu opremu za operativno lečenje u domenu ortopedске hirurgije.

Ni kulturni život ne zaostaje. Od 1966. godine u Nišu se održava Festival glumačkih ostvarenja jugoslovenskog filma, poznatiji pod popularnim nazivom *Filmski susreti*, Jugoslovenske horske svečanosti od 1969. godine (od 2002. Međunarodne muzičke svečanosti), a Niške muzičke svečanosti (*NIMUS*) osnovane su 1974. godine.

Rad književnog časopisa *Gradina* (osnovan 1900. godine), obnovljen je 1966. i oko njega se u ovom periodu formira književni krug niških stvaralaca koje predvode Ljubomir Stanojević, Dimitrije Milenković, Saša Hadži Tančić, Tihomir Nešić, Miodrag Petrović, a kasnije Slaviša Nikolin Živković, Goran Stanković, Zoran Ćirić i mnogi drugi. Većina ovih književnika će 1997. godine biti među osnivačima Društva književnika Niša. Od 1990. osniva se i Međunarodna književna kolonija u Sićevu na kojoj niški i srpski književnici razmenjuju iskustva sa kolegama iz inostranstva.

Likovni umetnici su u prilici da se od 1964. okupljaju, između ostalog, na koloniji u Sićevačkoj klisuri. Ideja za okupljanje slikara na ovom mestu potekla je od velike srpske slikarke Nadežde Petrović, koja je 1905. organizovala prvo okupljanje likovnih stvaralaca na ovom mestu. Juna 1970. otvorena je Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti koja je godišnje ostvarivala preko 40 izložbi.

U periodu 1960–1990. izuzetno je razvijeno amatersko kulturno stvaralaštvo u skoro svim granama kulture. Horsko pevanje, muzički život uopšte, dramske i folklorne sekcije raznih ansambala dugo su bile pravi rasadnik talenata, baš kao što je to bio slučaj sa Književnom omladinom Niša i Filmskom omladinom Niša. Početkom osmadesetih Niš postaje prepoznatljiv na muzičkom nebu Jugoslavije po grupama

Lutajuća srca, Galija, Kerber, Mama rok, Gospodin Pinokio, Hazari i Trivalija. Od prevača solista najviši domet je postigao Šaban Bajramović, kao, zvanično, jedan od svetskih deset džez glasova. Kulturno mesto u gradu postaje *Muzički klub 81*. Akademsko kulturno-umetničko društvo *Veljko Vlahović* postaje prepoznatljivo po horu kojim rukovodi mr Radojica Milosavljević.

U navedenom periodu Niš postaje prepoznatljiv i po sportu. Fudbalski klub *Radnički* dospeva do polufinala Kupa UEFA, rukometni klub *Železničar* postaje višestruki osvajač prvenstva i Kupa Jugoslavije, i igrao u finalu Kupa kupova, dok klubovi borilačkih veština zajedno sa atletskim i šah-klubom *Železničar* daju veliki broj reprezentativaca države koji zauzimaju visoka mesta na evropskim i svetskim takmičenjima.

Krajem osamdesetih dolazi do sve očiglednijih neslaganja unutar Saveza komunista Jugoslavije koja će imati za posledicu najpre prekid ekonomskih odnosa između Srbije i Slovenije. Pritisak Albanaca na Srbe na Kosovu postaje svakodnevna tema javnih glasila unutar SFRJ tako da će ubrzo, već početkom 1990. one republike koje su želele da se odvoje od Jugoslovenske zajednice to i učiniti. Najpre Slovenija, a potom i Hrvatska, pomognute spoljnim faktorom, dižu glas u želji da što pre budu odvojene od Jugoslavije kao samostalne države.

U ovakvoj situaciji u državi trpi privreda, a u Nišu najviše Elektronska i Mašinska industrija. Rušenjem Berlinskog zida preduzeća iz Srbije gube veliki broj poslovnih saradnika iz zemalja bivšeg Istočnog bloka, a usled unutrašnjih nemira i više nego napete situacije, sve je manje onih koji žele da ulažu u nestabilno srpsko tržište.

NIŠ U VIŠESTRANAČKOM ŽIVOTU 1991–2000.

Kada je na Vanrednom kongresu SKJ 1990. došlo do raspada ove partije, započeo je proces raspadanja SFRJ. Višestranačke skupštine Slovenije, Hrvatske, Bosne i Hercegovine i Makedonije donele su odluke o izdvajanju tih republika iz SFRJ. U Srbiji je septembra 1990. donet Ustav Srbije, da bi već decembra iste godine bili sprovedeni prvi višestranački izbori na kojima je većinu glasova odnela Socijalistička partija Srbije na čelu sa Slobodanom Miloševićem. Kao ozbiljni protivkandidati pobjedničkoj partiji pojavile su se Demokratska stranka (DS) i Srpski pokret obnove (SPO), stranke koje će u narednom periodu biti okosnica borbe protiv ideje komunizma na prostoru Srbije.

U Nišu je na prvim lokalnim izborima pobjedu odneo SPS i u narednim godinama svoje vlasti pokušao da razvije najpre nišku privredu, koja je mogla da bude od presudne važnosti za dalji napredak grada. Međutim, događaji koji su usledili nisu nimalo išli na ruku ostvarivanju ovih planova – aprila 1992. godine, u vreme kada su Srbija i Crna Gora osnovale Saveznu Republiku Jugoslaviju (SRJ), dolazi do proširenja građanskog rata i na prostore Bosne i Hercegovine, a sukob dobija sve izraženiji verski karakter. U toj atmosferi u Niš se sliva veliki broj izbeglih Srba sa prostora Kosova i Metohije, Hrvatske i Bosne i Hercegovine. Dodatni problem, koji će opteretiti život u SRJ i Nišu, predstavljaju ekonomske sankcije koje je Savet bezbednosti UN uveo krajem maja 1992. prema SRJ, smatrajući je odgovornom za sukobe na teritoriji bivše Jugoslavije. Ove godine Niš postaje centar Niškog okruga.

U takvoj atmosferi sredinom 1993. dolazi do nezapamćene inflacije koja će trajati do 1994. čija će posledica biti urušavanje skoro svih institucija i značajnijih fabrika u zemlji. Srbija se dugo nije oporavila od sankcija Saveta bezbednosti UN. Avgusta 1994. godine u operaciji OLUJA hrvatska država ubija ili proteruje u nekoliko dana sa svojih prostora preko 500000 Srba koje prihvataju skoro svi gradovi matice Srbije. Među ovim gradovima je i Niš koji izbegle ljude interventno smešta u ugostiteljske objekte PARK, NIŠ i motel u Sićevu.

Predsednici Hrvatske, Bosne i Hercegovine i Srbije potpisali su sporazum o prekidu neprijateljstva u novembru 1995. godine u Dejtonu (SAD). U decembru iste godine potpisan je i mirovni ugovor u Parizu. Oružani sukobi su okončani. Naredne godine na lokalnim izborima, održanim 17. novembra 1996. godine u Nišu odnosi pobedu koalicija ZAJEDNO (DS i SPO). Zbog pokušaja prekrajanja izborne volje građana Niša, vođe koalicije ZAJEDNO i stranke DS i SPO pozvale su građane na mirni protest koji je trajao od 17. 11. 1996. do 27. 1. 1997. Centralno mesto na kome su se održavali protesti 96 dana bio je gradski Trg oslobođenja (danas Trg kralja Milana). Ovim protestima Niš je dao primer ostalim gradovima u Srbiji kako se brani građanska sloboda. Već naredne godine 4. 9. 1998. god. u Nišu je otvoreno prvo diplomatsko predstavništvo u istoriji Srbije van Beograda – konzulat Republike Grčke.

Život u Nišu skoro da je zamro pod naletima političkih događaja koji su tih godina potresali Srbiju i Balkan. Pa ipak, gradske institucije pokušavaju da se izbore sa problemima koji pritiskaju grad. Svojim akcijama niški Rotary club, čija je aktivnost obnovljena 1996, pokušava da reanimira umrtnu privredu, ali samo za kratko. Ubrzo je buknuo staro žarište sukoba na Kosovu i Metohiji. Zbog stalne napetosti u ovoj pokrajini, bezbednost su održavale velike policijske i vojne snage Republike Srbije i SRJ. Početkom 1999. sazvana je međunarodna konferencija u Rambujeu i Parizu, još jedna u nizu međunarodnih konferencija, posvećenih rešavanju problema na području bivše SFRJ. Odbijanje delegacije SRJ da potpiše ponuđeni dokument dalo je povoda članicama NATO-pakta da u proleće 1999.

napadnu Jugoslaviju bez saglasnosti OUN. Bombardovanje je trajalo više od dva meseca, a najveće žrtve i razaranja, pored Kosova i Metohije, podneli su gradovi centralne i južne Srbije. Tokom NATO agresije na SRJ poginulo je više hiljada ljudi, srušen je veliki broj kuća, škola i mostova. U avio-napadima NATO snage su koristile bombe sa osiromašenim plutonijumom, a cela Srbija je bila zasuta tzv. *kasetnim bombama* različitih vrsta. U isto vreme, širom Evrope (Grčka, Italija, Španija, Francuska, Nemačka, Norveška, Rusija, Makedonija) organizovane su demonstracije protiv bombardovanja Srbije.

Najveće štete u Nišu je podnela severozapadna zona grada (tzv. industrijska zona) na čijoj teritoriji su se nalazile Duvanska industrija Niš, najveća fabrika za preradu duvana na Balkanu, kao i rezerve JUGOPETROLA u gasu i nafti. Velike štete pretrpelo je i naselje Šljaka koje se nalazi nedaleko od vojnog aerodroma. Što je vreme više odmicalo, a otpor jugoslovenske vojske bivao sve jači, to su NATO snage pribegavale razornijim bombardovanjima. Na kraju, nakon više od dva meseca otpora, SRJ je potpisala mirovni sporazum (tzv. Kumanovski sporazum) kojim je završen rat i započelo novo poglavlje u istoriji Srbije. Za vreme NATO agresije na Srbiju u Nišu je poginulo 25 građana, uglavnom od ranjavanja delovima kasetnih bombi.

Period od jula 1999. do avgusta 2000. obeležile su u Srbiji i Nišu serije demonstracija kako protiv aktuelnog režima na čelu sa Slobodanom Miloševićem, tako i protiv prisustva NATO snaga na Kosovu i Metohiji. Oformljena politička koalicija Pokret za demokratsku Srbiju (PDS) prerasla je i stopila se u koaliciju DOS, koja je postavila za cilj da na saveznim izborima zakazanim za septembar 2000. odnese pobeđu nad SPS i Slobodanom Miloševićem. Na predsedničkim izborima najozbiljniji protivkandidat Slobodanu Miloševiću bio je dr Vojislav Koštunica ispred koalicije DOS. I zaista, Koštunica i DOS su odneli ubedljivu pobeđu koju je Republička izborna komisija poništila, što je izazvalo gnev građana.

Kao i 1996, tako je i 2000. došlo do okupljanja građana na Trgu oslobođenja. Treba naglasiti da su studentske organizacije,

kao i pokret OTPOR bili stvarni nosioci ideje obaranja Slobodana Miloševića i snažna podrška koaliciji DOS. Niš je oktobra 2000. godine bio među prvima koji su krenuli 5. oktobra u Beograd, predvođeni predsednikom Opštine Niš Zoranom Živkovićem i drugim stranačkim ličnostima. Nakon par dana javnosti se obratio Slobodan Milošević priznajući poraz na izborima i u isto vreme čestitajući dr Vojislavu Koštunici, novom i poslednjem predsedniku Savezne Republike Jugoslavije.

U poslednjoj deceniji 20. stoleća u Nišu je otvoren veliki broj privatnih radio i TV stanica. Pored *Radio Niša*, kao isturene jedinice RTB (kasnije RTS), pojavljuju se privatne radio-stanice *Fast*, *City*, *Banker*, *Radio Petica*, *Radio Belle Amie*, dok se od TV stanica javljaju najpre TV5+ (kasnije TV5 i TV Puls), *Nais*, *Belle Amie*, *Banker*, *Art*, *GTV* (kasnije NTV), *OTV*, *Nišava* i mnoge druge. Raznolikošću uređivačke koncepcije, ove radio i TV stanice su, sa manje ili više uspeha, uspevale da očuvaju građanski duh Niša.

U ovom periodu u Nišu se održavao Festival starogradskih pesama i romansi *Niška jesen*, na kome su učestvovala mnoga poznata imena srpske i jugoslovenske estrade. Dolazak nove političke vlasti usloviće, pored ostalog, drugačije shvatanje kulture i identiteta Niša i okoline.

NIŠ U VREME DOS-A

Pobedom dr Vojislava Koštunice na septembarskim izborima i preuzimanjem lokalne, republičke i savezne vlasti od strane koalicije DOS (Demokratska opozicija Srbije), započinje nova etapa u političkoj istoriji Srbije. Nakon hapšenja Slobodana Miloševića i njegovog isporučenja Hagu, radi suđenja zbog ratnih zločina, koje je Haški tribunal tek trebalo da dokaže u postupku suđenja, dolazi do oštre podele unutar DOS-a i do sve češćih nesuglasica u odnosima Vojislava Koštunice, predsednika SRJ i Zorana Đinđića, predsednika Vlade Republike Srbije. To je ujedno bio i sukob predsednika dve parlamentarne stranke (DSS i DS), što je rezultovalo otežanom saradnjom članova ovih stranaka u većini gradova Srbije.

Pored brojnih poslanika, Niš daje Saveznog ministra unutrašnjih poslova Zorana Živkovića, koji će na ovom položaju ostati sve do marta 2003. kada, posle atentata na predsednika Vlade Srbije, Zorana Đinđića, u vanrednim uslovima vrši funkciju premijera Srbije sve do januara 2004. godine. Nakon parlamentarnih izbora sprovedenih decembra 2003. i posle dužih konsultacija, Vojislav Koštunica postaje premijer Srbije.

Niš osniva i ulazi u Evroregion Sofija–Skoplje–Niš, kao rodni grad Konstantina Velikog, povezuje se sa gradovima koji su na bilo koji način vezani za ovu ličnost (Trir, Milano, Rim, Jork, Jerusalim, Istanbul, Jerusalim), a od 2002. godine proslavlja gradsku slavu Sveti car Konstantin i carica Jelena (3. jun po novom kalendaru). U okviru slave se održavaju brojne kulturne manifestacije, sportska takmičenja i međunarodni naučni skup *NIŠ I VIZANTIJA*. U Nišu svoja predstavništva otvaraju Američki i Francuski kulturni centar,

Udruženje Dante Aligijeri, a osnivaju se udruženja Vukova zadužbina (ogranak u Nišu) i Ćirilica.

Vremenom je u Nišu grupa zaljubljenika u džez muziku na čelu sa Aleksandrom Batom Anastasijevićem počela da okuplja poštovaoce ove muzike. Ova grupa ljudi je 1983. osnovala džez festival *NIŠVIL*. Zahvaljujući ovom festivalu, u Nišu su gostovali veliki džez umetnici poput Solomona Burkea, Dušana Gojkovića, Sindi Dalfer. Od 2003. godine kao gradska manifestacija se organizuje Festival *NISOMNIA*, konceptijski vrlo sličan novosadskom *EXIT*-u. Održavanje ovog festivala izaziva veliku buru u javnosti, ali kvalitet muzičara i odziv publike opravdavaju sva ulaganja u ovaj veliki projekat. Počinju ozbiljniji konzervatorski radovi, kako na krstionici iz prve polovine 4. stoleća otkrivene jula 2000. na Medijani, tako i na ogradi nehrišćanskog hrama pronađenoj na istoj lokaciji. Ova otkrića zbog svog značaja ponovo vraćaju Niš u žižu svetske javnosti.

U ovom periodu hor Studentskog kulturnog centra, pod rukovodstvom mr Suzane Kostić, premijerno izvodi *Carminu buranu* Karla Orfa i *Requiem* Wolfganga Amadeusa Mocarta. Iznenada je preminuo Milorad Veljković Špaja, višedecenijski muzički pedagog i pravi naslednik dela mr Radojice Milosavljevića u vođenju hora Studentskog kulturnog centra, koji je ovih godina bio u pravoj ekspanziji. U narednom periodu mr Suzana Kostić se posvećuje pedagoškom radu, sve češće dirigentsku palicu predajući mr Zoranu Stanisavljeviću. U Nišu se otvara Fakultet lepih umetnosti koji bi u sebi trebalo da objedini Fakultet likovnih umetnosti, Fakultet muzičkih umetnosti i Fakultet dramskih umetnosti. Niški pisac Zoran Ćirić 2002. dobija prestižnu književnu nagradu kritike časopisa *NIN* za roman *HOBO*, a iste godine časopis *GRADINA* započinje sa redovnim izlaženjem u novoj vizuelnoj formi.

Oktobra 2001. godine, pod još uvek nedovoljno razjašnjenim okolnostima, požar je zahvatio veliki Saborni hram posvećen Svetoj Trojici. Prema zvaničnom saopštenju Ministarstva unutrašnjih poslova Niš Radomira Gvozdenovića, do paljevine, u kojoj je stradao veliki broj umetničkih dela velike vrednosti, došlo je otapanjem sveća u toku noći. Donacijama Nišlija i vernika iz drugih sredina, pa i

drugih verskih zajednica, vrlo brzo se pristupilo sanaciji hrama koji je danas ponovo u funkciji.

I pored predizbornih obećanja, nova vlast nije uspjela da reši nagomilane probleme u Elektronskoj i Mašinskoj industriji, tako da problem radnika koji sve češće ostaju bez posla nije rešen niti se naziralo bio kakvo rešenje. Iako je problem denacionalizacije bio jedna od predizbornih tačaka koje je DOS trebalo zakonski da reguliše, ni ovaj segment, posebno zanimljiv Nišlijama, nije rešen.

Kada je 12. marta 2003. u atentatu ubijen predsednik Vlade Srbije dr Zoran Đinđić, Srbija se našla u situaciji u kojoj nije bila od 1903, kada su ubijeni kralj Aleksandar Obrenović i Draga Mašin. U situaciji naraslih političkih tenzija, vršilac dužnosti premijera Srbije postaje Zoran Živković. U vanrednom stanju, koje je proglasila Vlada Srbije, u akciji *Sablja* biće privedeno na hiljade osoba za koje se pretpostavljalo da imaju veze sa atentanom u kome je ubijen Zoran Đinđić.

U periodu kada je Zoran Živković vršio dužnost premijera Srbije, u Nišu se, uz veliku finansijsku pomoć Kraljevine Norveške, otvara aerodrom *Konstantin Veliki*, a iste godine (2003) *Filip Moris* kupuje Duvansku industriju Niš. Kao kruna svega, odobravaju se sredstva za snimanje filma Zdravka Šotre *Zona Zamfirova*, prema istoimenom delu Stevana Sremca. Ovaj film, za koji je muziku radio Nenad Milosavljević (*Galija*), zabeležiće milionsku gledanost u Srbiji i potući sve rekorde u gledanosti.

KRATKA ISTORIJA NIŠA (2004–2013)

U napetoj situaciji posle atentata na dr Zorana Đinđića, funkciju v. d. premijera Srbije vršio je jedan od potpredsednika Demokratske stranke i Savezni ministar unutrašnjih poslova Zoran Živković, koji je na ovoj funkciji bio do 28. decembra 2003. godine. Vojislav Koštunica je postao predsednik Vlade Srbije, koju su činile stranke DSS, NS, G17, SDA, a podržavao SPS. Ova koalicija je preuzela vlast u Nišu – na lokalnim izborima u Nišu ubedljivu pobedu za gradonačelnika odnosi Smiljko Kostić, kao kandidat Nove Srbije. On je na izborima osvojio 62,6 odsto glasova birača.

Odmah nakon održanih izbora, došlo je do eskalacije nasilja na Kosovu i Metohiji 17. marta 2004. godine, što je dovelo do naraslih tenzija koje su obeležile politiku Vlade Srbije u ovom periodu. Niš počinje da gubi na privredno-ekonomskom rastu, tako da će do kraja 2007. godine doći do povećanog broja nezaposlenih i velikog broja otpuštenih radnika. U procesu privatizacije društvenih preduzeća veliki broj radnika ostaje bez posla ili živi u nepodnošljivim uslovima, tako da su sve češći štrajkovi nezadovoljnih ljudi. U Niš se sliva veliki broj proteranih i odbeglih ljudi sa prostora Kosova i Metohije. Ono što je karakteristično za ovaj period gradske vlasti jeste činjenica da je Niš podeljen, teritorijalno i administrativno, na pet gradskih opština: Medijana, Pantalej, Palilula, Crveni krst i Niška Banja.

Ono što je obeležilo par poslednjih godina gradske vlasti u ovom sazivu bilo je pitanje političke rehabilitacije Dragiše Cvetkovića. Kroz nauku i umetnost ponovo je rasvetljena delatnost poslednjeg premijera Vlade Kraljevine Jugoslavije: najpre je književnik Vidosav Petrović priredio knjigu *Dragiša Cvetković – njim samim*, u kojoj je

objavljen veliki broj njegovih govora i članaka; potom je maja 2007. premijerno izvedena monodrama *Besane noći Dragiše Cvetkovića*, koju je režirao i lik D. Cvetkovića odigrao glumac Niškog narodnog pozorišta Aleksandar Mihailović. Nekoliko meseci kasnije, premijerno je pušten film Mikija Stamenkovića o Dragiši Cvetkoviću. Odlukom Gradske skupštine, ulica Božidara Adžije je preimenovana u Dragiše Cvetkovića, a odlukom Veća Okružnog suda u Nišu iz septembra 2009. ovaj zaslužni Nišlija je posthumno rehabilitovan.

Na republičkim i lokalnim izborima održanim maja 2008. godine, republičku vlast formirale su koalicija *Za evropsku Srbiju* koju su činile DS, G17+, SPO, koalicija SPS–Jedinstvena Srbija–PUPS i stranke nacionalnih manjina. Skoro identična je bila i gradska vlast koja je formirana u Nišu. Smiljka Kostića je na mestu gradonačelnika Niša zamenio mr Miloš Simonović (DS), dok je na funkciju predsednika gradske Skupštine izabran prof. dr Mile Ilić (SPS). Ovi izbori su, posle dvanaest godina, vratili SPS u gradsku vlast.

Juna 2008. umro je Šaban Bajramović, legendarni pevač. Gradska skupština je godinu dana kasnije (5. maja 2009. godine) donela odluku po kojoj je Južni bulevar preimenovan u Bulevar Šabana Bajramovića. Ovaj poznati umetnik je dobio svoj spomenik na keju pored Nišave, nedaleko od tvrđavskog mosta, delo vajara Vladana Ašanina, za koji su sredstva donirali režiser Goran Paskaljević, muzičar Goran Bregović, bivši premijer Srbije Zoran Živković, pozorišni režiser i tada aktuelni ministar kulture Nebojša Bradić, gradonačelnik Niša Miloš Simonović, glumac, reditelj i filmski producent Ljubiša Samardžić, organizator festivala *Rock Village* Mirko Miljuš i Esma Redžepova. Ministar kulture Nebojša Bradić je otkrio spomenik 12. avgusta 2010. godine, na dan otvaranja *Nishville* džez festivala.

Geostrateški položaj Niša uslovio je osnivanje Regionalnog centra za vanredne situacije između Srbije i Rusije. Ovaj centar je postao aktivan avgusta 2010. godine, sa prvenstvenim zadatkom pružanja pomoći ugroženima od elementarnih nepogoda, gašenju uglavnom letnjih požara većih razmera i tome sličnog.

U leto 2009. godine objavljeno je prvo izdanje romana *Konstantinovo raskršće* Dejana Stojiljkovića – dela koje je dobilo nagradu

Zadužbine Miloš Crnjanski 2010. godine, a koje će do sredine 2011. izaći u još 17 izdanja i biti prevedeno na sve svetske jezike. U ovom periodu objavljena je knjiga *Milanski edikt* Nebojše Ozimića koja je, do sredine 2011, izašla u četiri izdanja. Posle skoro dve decenije čekanja, objavljena je *Enciklopedija Niša–tom kultura*. U ovom periodu izlazi još jedno kapitalno izdanje grada Niša – *Leksikon Niša*.

Pitanje obeležavanja 1700 godina Milanskog edikta 2013. godine aktuelizuje se decembra 2009. godine kada grupa privrednika na čelu sa Draganom Miloševićem, predstavnicima svih političkih stranaka u Nišu, predstavnicima žandarmerije i Vojske Srbije, a uz blagoslov i podršku tadašnjeg episkopa niškog gospodina Irineja (Gavrilovića) potpisuje Deklaraciju o svenarodnom jedinstvu, kojom se predviđa aktivan dalji rad na obeležavanju godišnjice značajne po istoriju čovečanstva.

Januara 2010. formira se Odbor za izgradnju kompleksa cara Konstantina na Viniku, čiji je predsednik Dragan Milošević. Ovo telo finansira treće izdanje knjige *Milanski edikt* Nebojše Ozimića, a u isto vreme Centar za crkvene studije pokreće seriju mesečnih predavanja koja će trajati sve do 2013. godine. U kasnijem periodu, na poziv Grada, u Niš dolaze predstavnici Arla, Trira, Milana i Jorka, tako da kulturne i privredne veze ovih gradova iz tzv. mreže Konstantinovih gradova svakodnevno jačaju.

Nakon smrti patrijarha Pavla, na izbornoj sednici SPC održanoj 22. 1. 2010. godine, za 45. patrijarha izabran je episkop niški Irinej (Gavrilović), a ustoličen je u Peći 3. 10. iste godine. Njegovim dolaskom na čelo SPC dodatno se aktuelizuje pitanje proslave 1700 godina Milanskog edikta. Na zasedanju Svetog Sinoda SPC, 26. maja 2011. za episkopa niškog izabran je dr Jovan (Purić), dotadašnji vikarni episkop dioklijski. Sam čin ustoličenja dr Jovana Purića u episkopa niškog odigrao se 7. avgusta 2011. godine u prisustvu patrijarha Irineja i drugih episkopa SPC.

Dragan Milošević 2012. dobija nagradu *Zadužbine Miše Anastasijevića* za arhitektonsko rešenje kompleksa cara Konstantina, ali do krajnje realizacije ovog projekta, za koji se pretpostavlja da je u mnogo čemu mogao da oživi niški region, nikada nije došlo.

Nesporazum na relaciji Grad Niš–Eparhija Niška u potpunosti je najpre blokirao dalju realizaciju ovog projekta, a potom ga prepustio zaboravu.

Tokom 2011. godine odustaje se od prvobitne ideje izgradnje sportske arene *Car Konstantin* i proširuje Hala *Čair* za Evropsko prvenstvo u rukometu. Septembra 2011. radovi na hali su bili završeni, delegacija EHF je prihvatila objekat, tako da je Evropsko prvenstvo u rukometu za muškarce moglo da počne. Prema zvaničnom izveštaju, radovi na hali su koštali skoro 2,5 miliona evra, što je predstavljalo veliku investiciju. Kako je hala proširena za 500 sedećih mesta, to je sada njen kapacitet podignut na 5000 posetilaca. Nešto kasnije, vrše se intervencije u hali na zahtev ITF-a, Međunarodne teniske organizacije, pa se hala prilagođava i teniskim standardima.

U ovom periodu niška publika dobija svoju bitku: zbog uzavrele atmosfere koju stvara na reprezentativnim utakmicama, Odbojkaški savez Srbije i Rukometni savez Srbije traže da se u Nišu odigravaju važnije utakmice srpskih nacionalnih timova. Inicijativi da se Niš aktivira kao centar sportskih događanja u ovom regionu pridružuje se i Teniski savez Srbije, pa se u hali igraju utakmice Dejvis kupa Srbija–Švedska. Tako tokom 2012. godine Nišlije uživaju u vrhunskom sportu: Evropskom prvenstvu u rukometu, utakmicama prvog kola Dejvis kupa između Srbije i Švedske, Kupu Radivoja Koraća u košarci, Svetskoj ligi u odbojci, FED kupu...

Istovremeno, rađa se inicijativa za izgradnju novog Gradskog stadiona, koji je bio u kritičnom stanju. Zbog dotrajalosti i opasnosti od urušavanja 1995. zabranjena je upotreba istočne i severne tribine, dok je 2008. i deo južne tribine izgubio upotrebnu dozvolu. Marta 2011. srušene su u potpunosti istočna, severna i južna tribina, da bi kompletna rekonstrukcija i izgradnja tri nove tribine bila započeta 5. avgusta 2011. godine. Ulaganja Vlade Srbije i Grada Niša iznosila su oko milijardu dinara. Novosagrađeni stadion ima kapacitet 18500 gledalaca. Prvu utakmicu na renoviranom stadionu, doduše sa još nezavršenom istočnom tribinom, FK *Radnički* je odigrao 15. septembra 2012. godine protiv ekipe *Smedereva* pod svetlošću novih reflektora. U narednih godinu dana, FK *Radnički* se pozicionirao

u samom vrhu Super lige, a stadion je, posle duže vremena, bio spreman da prihvati veliki broj navijača, tako da su karte za utakmice uglavnom bile rasprodate.

Promena gradske vlasti dogodila se formiranjem nove Vlade Srbije nakon parlamentarnih izbora, koji su bili održani 6. maja 2012. godine. Posle dva i po meseca sastavljena je Vlada na čijem čelu je bio Ivica Dačić, dok je prvi potpredsednik bio Aleksandar Vučić. Istovremeno, na predsedničkim izborima Tomislav Nikolić (SNS) je pobedio Borisa Tadića (DS), nakon čega Demokratska stranka počinje sa opozicionim delovanjem. U Nišu na mesto gradonačelnika dolazi dr Zoran Perišić, kardiolog (SNS), a prof. dr Mile Ilić (SPS) ostaje na mestu predsedavajućeg Skupštine grada Niša.

Ubrzano se na nivou države kreće sa pripremama za obeležavanje 1700 godina od potpisivanja Milanskog edikta. Sam početak 2013. bio je u znaku Milanskog edikta – 10. januara Narodni muzej u galeriji Sinagoga otvara izložbu *Hrišćanstvo u Nišu kroz vekove*, a već 17. januara počinje zvanična proslava Milanskog edikta koncertom ruskog hora Sretenjskog manastira u Narodnom pozorištu u Nišu.

Niška opština Medijana se priključuje proslavi izgradnjom sedamnaest česama na prostoru centra grada.

PREGLED DOSADAŠNJIH DEŠAVANJA VEZANIH ZA OBELEŽAVANJE JUBILEJA MILANSKOG EDIKTA

planirane, organizovane i realizovane manifestacije u koordinaciji
sa Savetom za Milanski edikt, Ministarstvom kulture i informisanja,
kancelarijom za obeležavanje jubileja Milanski edikt / službom za poslove
Gradonačelnika Niša.

Datum	Mesto	Opis događaja
11. januar		Dodela nagrade „11. januar“, najviše priznanje Grada Niša
17. januar	Narodno pozorište Niš	Svečani koncert duhovne muzike hora Sretenjskog manastira iz Ruske Federacije
Januar – mart	Narodni muzej Niš; Galerija Sinagoga	Izložba „Hrišćanstvo u Nišu kroz vekove“. Grupna izložba kustosa arheologa, istoričara, istoričara umetnosti i etnologa Narodnog muzeja Niš, koja prikazuje bogatu tradiciju niškog kraja gledanu kroz prizmu hrišćanstva. Muzejski materijal obuhvata period od ranonohrišćanskog perioda do današnjih dana. Prikazane su kopije fresaka iz ranohrišćanskih grobnica u Jagodin- mali. Izložba je zapravo presek bogate hrišćanske istorije Niša, daje i uvid u neke zaboravljene običaje i prikazuje etnos grada.
20. februar	Univerzitet u Nišu - Svečana sala	Dodela stipendije „Car Konstantin“, Kompanija „Philip Morris“ i Grad Niš.
26–27. februar		Pravoslavna Eparhija Niška – jubilarna proslava rođenja dvojice velikih vladara sa naših prostora: • Svetog Simeona Mirotočivog 26. Februara - 08.00 č Sveta Arhijerejska liturgija u crkvi svetog Pantelejmona u Nišu - 19.00 č Svečana Akademija u sali Svetosavskog doma • Svetog Cara Konstantina 27. februara - 08.00 č Sveta Arhijerejska Liturgija u crkvi sv. Konstantina i Jelene u Nišu.
27. februar	Narodno pozorište Niš	Premijera predstave pod nazivom „Konstantin“.

28. februar	Osnovne i srednje škole u Nišu	„Javni čas o Konstantinu“, Ministarstvo prosvete, nauke i tehnološkog razvoja Republike Srbije i Školska uprava Niš.
1. mart	Svetosavski dom	Koncert vokalne grupe „Constantine“. Program duhovne i etno muzike iz ovih krajeva. Gostuju Beogradski muški hor i Kvartet Forte.
5. mart	Univerzitet u Nišu	Predavanje Ser Pol Džadža, predsednika Britansko-srpske privredne komore, Britansko-srpska privredna komora i Univerzitet u Nišu. Poseta Sir Paul Judge je značajna zbog ekonomske saradnje Niša i Velike Britanije, odnosno povezivanja privatnih preduzetnika i privrednika. Poseta je značajna zbog buduće saradnje koja bi mogla da se uspostavi na polju ekonomije, kulture i obrazovanja između grada Niša i gradova Velike Britanije. Ovo predavanje je samo jedan od događaja koji je posvećen obeležavanju jubileja Milanskog Edikta, jer je upravo Car Konstantin inaugurisan u Jorku.
7–25. mart	Galerija Srbija	Izložba tapiserija Zagorke Stojanović „Priča o jednoj ikoni“, Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti. Izložbu čini 28 tapiserija velikih dimenzija neposredno inspirisanih čudotvornom ikonom Bogorodice Ahtirske.
22. mart	Narodno pozorište Niš	Simpozijum „Razvoj medicine od Konstantina do danas“, Srpsko lekarsko društvo - Podružnica Niš. Značaj predavanja je da se učesnici upoznaju sa jednim delom istorijata medicine, počev od perioda rimskog carstva, pa do danas, sa akcentom na mogućnosti nekih oblasti medicine u Nišu.
23. mart	Trg Stevana Sremca	Manifestacija „Dobrodošlo proleće“, Kancelarija za obeležavanje jubileja Milanski Edikt. Od 11.00 č do 13.00 č, održana je manifestacija planiranom predstavom lutarskog pozorišta, predstavom dramske sekcije umetničke škole, muzičkim nastupima učenika muzičke škole, prodajom suvenira i medijskom promocijom kalendara događaja tokom 2013.
April–maj	Galerija Sinagoga	Izložba „Trag u vremenu“, Narodni muzej Niš.

24. april	Sala Simfonijskog orkestra	Koncert „Zahvalnost tvorcu“, Niški simfonijski orkestar.
14. maj	Nišavski kej – amfiteatar	„III Humanitarno-sportske igre BEZ GRANICA - Rimske igre“, Humanitarno udruženje „Rukovet“.
17. maj	Trg Kralja Milana	Maturantska parada „Ples tolerancije“, Ministarstvo omladine i sporta Republike Srbije.
17–18. maj	Univerzitet u Nišu	Naučni skup „1700 godina Milanskog edikta“, Pravni fakultet Univerziteta u Nišu.
18–19. maj	Hala sportova „Čair“	18. Smotra folklora srpske dijasporu u Evropi, Studentski kulturni centar Niš i Turistička organizacija Niš.
24–25. maj	Univerzitet u Nišu	Međunarodni naučni skup „Dijalog kultura i partnerstvo civilizacija na Balkanu – put mira, saradnje i demokratske integracije“, Filozofski fakultet u Nišu i Centar za naučnoistraživački rad SANU i Univerziteta u Nišu.
25. maj – 5. jun	Salon 77	Projekat „Savremenost - Promenljiva geografija“, Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti
30. maj – 21. jun	Paviljon u Tvrđavi	Izložba „Susretanja“ - dela iz fondova likovnih kolonija Mileševa, Sopoćanska viđenja i Jelena Anžijska, Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti.
31. maj – 2. jun	Univerzitet u Nišu	Međunarodni naučni skup „Sveti car Konstantin i hrišćanstvo“, Centar za crkvene studije Niš, Filozofski fakultet Univerziteta u Nišu.
31. maj – 6. jun		Konstantinovi dani (Slava Grada Niša, Sveti car Konstantin i carica Jelena), Turistička organizacija Niš
Maj – oktobar	Galerija Sinagoga	Izložba „Kasno antička nekropola u Jagodin-mali“, Narodni muzej Niš.
3–7. jun	Univerzitet u Nišu	XII Međunarodni naučni skup vizantologa „Niš i Vizantija“, Grad Niš, Univerzitetu Nišu i Eparhija niška.

3. jun	Niška tvrđava	Muzičko-scenski spektakl „Konstantinus Magnus“ autora i kompozitora Aleksandra Sanje Ilića. Učestvovali: simfonijski orkestar, veliki mešoviti hor, vokalni i instrumentalni solisti i balet iz zemlje i inostranstva.
6–19. jun	Salon 77	Izložba „Pergament Srbije - Jagnje Božije”, Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti.
11. jun – 1. jul	Paviljon u Tvrđavi	Izložba „Dvanaest umetnika o Ediktu“, Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti.
15. jun	Niška tvrđava	„IX Betovenova simfonija“, koncert u izvođenju Niškog Simfonijskog Orkestra
23–26. jun	Svetosavski dom i plato ispred crkve Sv. Cara Konstantina i Carice Jelene	Festival duhovne muzike „Muzički edikt“, Crkveno pevačka družina „Branko“, Crkvena opština Niš i Eparhija niška
28. jun	Niška tvrđava	Opera „Trubadur“ Đuzepa Verdija u izvođenju Beogradske opere
PLANIRANE MANIFESTACIJE		
Avgust		Prikazivanje dokumentarnog filma o Konstantinu.
5–10. avgust		Međunarodna kolonija animiranog filma za decu i mlade „Konstantin 2013 Pantelejev“.
10–11. avgust		Međunarodni festival animiranog filma za decu i mlade „Konstantinov Zlatnik“.
15–18. avgust		Internacionalni džez festival „Nišvil“ 2013.
Avgust		Festival vina.
Avgust		Filmski susreti Niš 2013.
Septembar		Prezentacija projekta „Upoznajte Konstantina“ Prve Niške gimnazije Stevan Sremac.
3–30. septembar	Galerija Srbija	Izložba Vlade Veličkovića, Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti.
14. septembar	Niška tvrđava	„Muzika Konstantinovog grada“, koncert vizantijske muzike Slobodana Trkulje.

14. septembar		Posveta, sakralno uređenje župske crkve Uzvišenja svetog križa u Nišu (osveštavanje crkve).
19. septembar	Galerija kompanije „Philip Morris”	Izložba „Konstantin Veliki i Milanski edikt 313 – Rađanje hrišćanstva u rimskim provincijama na tlu Srbije“.
20–21. septembar		Euharistija, kardinal Anđelo Skola - milanski nadbiskup
Septembar		Kongres evropskih vitezova vina, Britansko-srpska privredna komora, Lisa Braun
3–28. oktobar	Galerija Srbija	Multimedijalna izložba prof. Čedomira Vasića, Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti
6. oktobar		Centralna proslava obeležavanja Milanskog edikta, Srpska pravoslavna crkva
Oktobar	Galerija Sinagoga	Izložba ikona „Akatiist večnom“, Narodni muzej Niš
28. oktobar		Manifestacija povodom zatvaranja godine Milanskog edikta
Novembar		Sajam knjiga posvećen jubileju Milanskog edikta, NKC
Novembar – decembar		Izložba DOBRO SVETLIM – ANTIČKE SVETILJKE, gostujuća izložba Muzeja grada Beograda
4. decembar		Grupna izložba slika grupe profesora sa Fakulteta umetnosti u Nišu

HRONOLOGIJA VAŽNIJIH DOGAĐAJA

4000–3000. g. p. n. e. – Praistorijski nalazi iz doba neolita, ranog bronzanog doba, na lokalitetima Bubanj, Humska čuka i dr. otkrivaju naseljenost područja Niša još u to doba.

2000. g. p. n. e. – Veći broj otkrivenih praistorijskih naselja u neposrednoj okolini današnjeg Niša (Bubanj, Hum, Gornja i Donja Vrežina, Trupale, Gornja Toponica).

8. stoleće p. n. e. Područje Niša je granična zona između Ilira i Tračana.

3. st. p. n. e. – Kelti su porazili Ilire, zauzeli sve krajeve i dali Nišu trajno ime Naissus (Vilin grad).

75. g. p. n. e. – Rimljani osvajaju područje Niša u vreme dardanskog rata.

161. god. – Niš se prvi put spominje u geografiji Klaudija Prolomeja, kao jedan od četiri najveća grada Dardanije.

2. st – Naissus je značajan rimski vojni logor –municipium.

280. god. – U Nišu je rođen Flavije Valerije Konstantin (Sveti car Konstantin).

306. god. – Flavije Valerije Konstantin proglašen je za rimskog imperatora (Konstantin Veliki).

4. st. – Antički Niš, sa Konstantinovom rezidencijom na Medijani je na vrhuncu razvoja kao rimski vojni i administrativni centar.

441. god. – Niš razoren u najezi Huna na Balkan, u kojoj su razoreni i mnogi drugi gradovi.

1185. god. – Srpski župan Stefan Nemanja zauzima Niš.

1189. god. – Stefan Nemanja i nemački car Fridrih Prvi Barbarosa sastaju se u Nišu i dogovaraju o zajedničkoj borbi protiv Vizantije.

1385. god. – Turci prvi put zauzimaju Niš (opsada je trajala 25 dana).

1443. god. – Velika bitka kod Niša. Erdeljski vojvoda Janko Hunjadi i srpski despod Đurađ Branković porazili su Turke. Niš je slobodan godinu dana.

1570. god. – U putopisu nemačkog diplomate Rimea pominje se dubrovačka kolonija u Nišu.

1723. god. – Izgrađena je niška Tvrđava koja spada u najlepša i najočuvanija turska zdanja na Balkanu.

1737. god. – Drugo austrijsko osvajanje Niša. Okupacija je trajala 85 dana.

1766. god. – Mitropolit Gavriilo objavljuje prvu knjigu *Sindeliija*.

1809. god. – Prve ustaničke borbe kod Niša protiv Turaka.

31. 5. 1809. god. – Boj na Čegru. Srpskom vojskom je komandovao resavski vojvoda Stevan Sindelić.

10. 1. 1878. god. – Niš je oslobođen od Turaka i posle skoro pet vekova robovanja, pripojen matici Srbiji.

1878. god. – Niš se značajno reguliše po Vinterovom *Projektu za regulaciju varoši Niša*. Počela je da radi Prva niška gimnazija.

1881. god. – Niš ima prvu bankarsku ustanovu.

1882. god. – Počela je da radi učiteljska škola.

1884. god. – Puštena je u saobraćaj železnička pruga Beograd–Niš. Izašao je prvi broj novina *Niški vjesnik*.

1884. god. – Osnovana je Železnička radionica koja kasnije postaje prvo i najveće preduzeće u gradu.

1886. god. – U Nišu je usvojen Zakon o osnivanju Kraljevske srpske akademije.

1887. god. – Osnovano prvo pozorište *Sindelić* u Nišu.

1889. god. Otvorena Narodna biblioteka i izgrađena zgrada okružnog načelstva (Banovina).

1892. god. – Osnovana je prva i jedina niška slobodnozidarska loža *NEMANJA*

1894. god. – Počela je da radi Viša devojačka škola.

1897. god. – Prikazan prvi film u Nišu.

1900. god. – Počinje izdavanje književnog časopisa *Gradina*.

1903. god. – Osnovano radničko kulturno-umetničko društvo.

1905. god. – Počela je da radi likovna kolonija Sićevo, koju je osnovala slikarka Nadežda Petrović.

1906. god. – Radi prvi stalni bioskop pod šatrom na Sindelićevom trgu.

1908. god. – Izgrađena je Hidrocentrala *Sveta Petka* na Nišavi kod mesta Ostrovica u Sićevačkoj klisuri.

1912. god. – Osnovana Komanda srpske avijacije sa sedištem u Nišu. Prvi aerodrom smešten na Trupalskom polju, nedaleko od Niša.

1914. god. – Niš postaje središte srpske Vlade, ratna prestonica Srbije.

7. 12. 1914. god. – Niška deklaracija. Narodna skupština Srbije donosi Nišku deklaraciju u kojoj su obrazloženi ciljevi oslobodilačkog rata i najavljeno ujedinjenje južnih Slovena u jednu državu. Ovaj dokument poslužiće kao predložak Krfskoj deklaraciji koja je bila osnova za stvaranje Kraljevine Jugoslavije.

1915–1918. god. – Niš je pod nemačko-bugarskom okupacijom u Prvom svetskom ratu.

12. 10. 1918. god. – Niš je oslobođen od okupatora.

1. 5. 1935. god. – Uspostavljanje civilnog vazdušnog saobraćaja.

27. 6. 1937. god. – Niš dobija novi vodovod, čime se u velikoj meri smanjuje broj zaraznih bolesti.

1936. god. – Osnovan prvi Rotari klub u Nišu.

27. 6. 1937. god. – Postavljen je temelj današnjoj zgradi Narodnog pozorišta.

28. 6. 1937. god. – Podignut je spomenik Oslobođiocima Niša u centru grada prema idejnom rešenju Antuna Augustinčića.

27. 6. 1937. god. – Objavljena knjiga Milovana Ristića *Spomenica Niša 1877- 1937*

17. 12. 1939. god. – podignut je spomenik kralju Aleksandru I Karađorđeviću na trgu nedaleko od zgrade današnjeg Pravnog fakulteta. Srušen 1944. od strane pripadnika sovjetsko-partizanskih jedinica.

1941. god. – Nemci okupiraju Niš. Otvaraju logor na Crvenom krstu iz koga je preko 12000 logoraša odvedeno i streljano na brdu Bujanj.

12. 2. 1942. god. – Organizovano je uspešno masovno bekstvo iz logora, prvo te vrste u porobljenoj Evropi.

14. 10. 1944. god. – Niš je oslobođen od Nemaca.

21. 02. 1945. god. – Osnovan Radio Niš, koji je danas deo mreže nacionalnog radija, a njegov program se preko srednjih talasa čuje u većem delu Balkana.

1960. god. – Osnovana su prva tri fakulteta u Nišu –Medicinski, Pravno-ekonomski i Tehnički.

1965. god. – Niš postaje univerzitetski grad, a Univerzitet u Nišu danas ima 13 fakulteta.

1966. god. – Osnovani Filmski susreti. Festival glumačkih ostvarenja jugoslovenskog igranog filma.

1969. god. – Osnovane Jugoslovenske horske svečanosti.

Juna 1970. god. – Otvorena je Galerija savremene likovne umetnosti.

1971. god. – Nedeljnik *Narodne novine* postaje prvi dnevni list i Nišu.

1974. god. – Održane su prve Niške muzičke svečanosti (*NIMUS*).

1975. god. – Niš postaje centar Niškog regiona.

1983. god. – Osnovan niški džez festival *NIŠVIL*.

1990. god. – Osnovana je Književna kolonija u Sićevu.

1992. god. – Niš postaje centar Niškog okruga.

1993. god. – Niški književnik Saša Hadži Tančić dobija prestižnu Andrićevu nagradu za zbirku pripovedaka.

1996. god. – Posle 60 godina obnovljen rad niškog Rotari kluba.

17. 11. 1996. – 27. 1. 1997. god. – Posle drugog izbornog kruga i velike krađe glasova, u Nišu počinje narodni protest. Trajao je 100 dana koliko je bilo potrebno da se prizna narodna volja. Na Savindan – 27. 1. 1997. konstituisana je Skupština grada.

1997. god. – Osnovano je Društvo književnika Niša.

4. 9. 1998. god. – U Nišu je otvoren Konzulat Republike Grčke. Prvo diplomatsko predstavništvo u istoriji Srbije van Beograda.

Mart–Jun 1999. god. – Bombardovanje Srbije od strane NATO alijanse. Tokom bombardovanja ubijeno je 25 Nišlija.

Septembar – Oktobar 2000. god. – Posle ubedljive pobe dr Vojislava Koštunice na predsedničkim izborima i nepriznavanja izbornih rezultata, nakon višednevnih okupljanja, građani Srbije su iz svih pravaca krenuli na Beograd. Niš je ponovo bio među prvim gradovima.

Oktobar 2001. god. – Pod još uvek nedovoljno razjašnjenim okolnostima izgoreo u požaru veliki Saborni hram posvećen Svetoj Trojici.

Novembar 2002. god. – niški književnik Zoran Ćirić dobija prestižnu nagradu kritike časopisa *NIN* za roman *HOBO*.

2003. god. – Zoran Živković sa ambasadorom Kraljevine Norveške otvara aerodrom *Konstantin Veliki*

2003. god. – Kompanija *Filip Moris* kupuje Duvansku industriju Niš.

2003. god. – Snima se film Zdravka Šotre *Zona Zamfirova*, prema istoimenom delu Stevana Sremca. Ovaj film, za koji je muziku radio Nenad Milosavljević (*Galija*), zabeležiće milionsku gledanost u Srbiji i potući sve dotadašnje bioskopske rekorde.

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Фонд Окружно повереништво за утврђивање злочина окупатора и њихових помагача Ниш 1944–1947. (КОЗАРА), кутије 1–4.

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Фонд Савез удружења бораца НОР среза Ниш (1947–1967).

Фонд Савез удружења бораца НОР градски одбор Ниш (1947–1955).

Збирка фотографија.

УНИ I – бб; А- ЗП- I – 2 - 5; А- ЗП - I – 2- 7; збирка *Браћа Стефановић*, одељење у Пироту.

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SHORT HISTORY OF NIŠ

The city of Niš is situated at 43° 19' 34" latitude north and 21° 54' 6" longitude east.

It is the biggest Serbian city southern of Belgrade, with more than 260000 inhabitants. Its gravitational sway extends from Kuršumlja to Dimitrovgrad and from Ražanj to Vranje, and it covers the area of 596 square kilometers, with more than 1000000 inhabitants.

The average height above sea level is 202 meters. The lowest point is near Trupale village (173 meters above sea level) and the highest is on Suva Planina Mountain (Falcon's Rock 1523 meters above sea level).

The river Nišava (Nissa or "the river of the nymphs" according to Roman transcription of the old Celts name) runs through it. It is the biggest tributary of the Južna Morava River with 0.38 draining coefficient and 285 meters draining height.

The city of Niš has moderate and continental climate.

Slava (Patron Saint's Day) of Niš City is St. Constantine and Queen Helena (3rd June).

THE CLASSICAL PERIOD

The valleys of Nišava and Južna Morava rivers, which run through fertile ravine, were very suitable, even in pre-history, for settling down the area where the city of Niš will be founded later.

Archeological findings of Senior Paleolithic Period were found near Svrljig, while traces of New Stone Age (Neolithic Period) were mostly preserved in two groups: "Starčevačka" and "Vinčanska", whose relics had been discovered in the central part of Niš and surrounding settlements. Especially, there are numerous findings from Bubanj-Hum group, which was developed in the transition from New Stone Age to Metal Period. Traces of homes, cult, economy objects and protective palisade were found on Bubanj and Hum. Movable objects were also found there.

It can be said that Dardanians were the eldest nation, in the sources marked in the area where Naissus will develop in the historical period. Of complex ethnical scene of pre-Roman population, natives of Illyrian and Celtic origin can be singled out. The etymology of town's name isn't known for sure, not even nowadays. Generally accepted interpretation is that the name Naissus is of Celtic origin, with its basic meaning "fairy's river".

Roman legions started to settle this area in time of Dardanian war (75–73 BC). Roman military camp Nais, present-day Niš, which was established at the beginning of the 2nd century, was the starting point of the departure in which Roman legions had made a rest either before or after starting up the battle with Dardanians. Due to the existence of great number of different tribe members, Naissus or Nissa will be mentioned as "Dardanian's" "Trachian" or "Illyrian" city. Many sacrificial altars were risen to the Roman Gods (Jupiter, Juno, Liber and Libera, Hercules), Greek (Omphale), Near Eastern (Mithras) but also to the domestic Thracian and Illyrian Gods (Thracian Horseman Mundrytus).

At the very beginning of the 3rd century Nais has reached a high degree in its development with numerous population, strong economy and agriculture. In this period Nais became very important military, economic and political center in province Moesia Superior. An ideal strategic position has caused such sudden development of the future city. Roads, passing through Nais, have been connecting then, as well as they do today, completely opposite parts of The Balkans – Niš and Sofia, Belgrade and Salonika, Kostolac and Lisum. Basis of the

Fortress, built probably in the middle of the 2nd century, when Nais was just a military camp, bridges built on The Nišava River, as well as many archaeological findings, give us only the orientation insight of the town's degree of development in the 3rd century.

Claudius II (Gothicus), who was born in this region, had gained conquest near Niš ten years before Constantine's birth in 269 AD. Thanks to the great knowledge of the terrain, he succeeded to conquest a group of about 50000 enemies, most of whom were Goths. Because of that, this army leader was honorary nicknamed Gothic. It is important that Constantine the Great has proclaimed Claudius II Gothic his most famous ancestor.

Around 280 AC Flavius Valerius Constantine was born, known as Constantine the Great, the founder of East Roman Empire with headquarters in Constantinople and one of the subscribers of the Edict of Milan, which stopped the pursuit of Christian. During the Constantine's empire Niš had among 10000–20000 inhabitants and was strong political, economical and religious center of this part in The Balkans.

As the separate part of the antique Niš there was one settlement with villas named Mediana, today turned into an archeological park, which has been situated in the middle of the road from Niš to Niška Banja and which outspread over about 40 hectares. Building villas in Mediana started by the end of the 3rd century, while most of them were built in the 4th, when Mediana became imperial residence. Constantines II, Constantine's son, used to stay there, in front of whom the usurper Vetranion in 350 AD had to lay down insignia, after unsuccessful attempt to over throne him. Julian and Valentine, successors to the throne of Constantine II were in Nais in 361 AD, more exactly in 364 AD.

Many imperial decrees were probably signed in Mediana between 314 and 364 AD, while Licinius was the ruler of this region. The decrees testify very frequent staying of Constantine and his successors in Nais. There were notified visits of Constantine I to Nais in 319, 329 and 334 AD. In emperor Theodosius' code there are two edicts that had been promoted in Nais. The first of them was

established by Constantine's sons, Constantius and Constans on January 19th 340 AD, and the other by Constans alone on February 2nd 340 AD. From Licinius' period (314–324 AD) what should be kept in mind is that in Nais high governmental officers have been constantly present during the entire 4th century.

There was a military factory and beside that there was military equipment workshop, as well as precious metals workshop. Silver plates produced in this factory have the official message – 317 AD, forged for the tenth anniversary of Licinius empire and have the inscriptions "*Licinius, the emperor, may you always win*"; in 321–322 AD in honor the tenth birthday of Constantine's sons, Creese and Constantine Prime.

In the long production line, the latest work from this workshop is the golden scroll from Feldioara city, Transylvania, hammered out in 379 AD, which had, beside the impress of the workshop of Niš, the relief of three emperors – Gratius, Theodosius and Vientius II. All this implies the great, many-century concentration of imperial power in Niš.

LIFE OF CHRISTIANS IN CLASSIC PERIOD OF NIŠ

Nais orthodoxy was probably formed in period from 325 until 330 AD, between two very important dates for Christianity: First Ecumenical Assembly (325 AD) and proclaiming the Byzantium, Greek town for New Rome (afterward Constantinople), metropolis of East Roman Empire. According to the fact that bishop of Nais was not present at the First Ecumenical Assembly (325 AD) until the time of Constantinople's foundation, it can be concluded that there were many churches in Emperor Constantine's birthplace.

Nais orthodoxy was mentioned for the first time six year after Constantine's death in 343 AD. In documents from Philipolic Assembly held that year, we find that Arianistic bishops have criticized former bishop of Nais Gaudentia (Gaudentius) because he did not observe the directions of its precursor, Aryan Kirijaka (Kiriakus),

but professed religion in a way it had been established over The First Ecumenical Assembly. Gaudentius did not only profess right religion but he was one of the most active bishops on Assembly that was held from November 343 until April 344 AD in Serdica, current Sofia. Thanks to its taking, bishop of Alexandria Athanasius, an Orthodox Church saint known as St. Athanasius the Great, has been rehabilitated of false accusations.

After the Assembly has been finished, Athanasius, in sign of gratitude, went to Nais with Gaudentius, where he celebrated Easter in 344 AD and performed a religious service. This moment was one of the brightest in almost two thousand old history of Niš, and Gaudentius was remembered as one of the rare orthodox bishop of Nais until the 6th century. Mental darkness ruled after him in Nais. Bonos (Bonosos), bishop of Nais whose signature can be found among attendants of Sirmium Assembly in 351 AD, will open a source of heretic bishops who had bishop chair of Nais until the 6th century. This bishop of Nais was very often erroneously identified with bishop of Serdica (current Sofia).

Even though Bonos had been proclaimed heretic on communal Assemblies in Macedonia, Salonika and in 391 AD in Kapua (Italy), which was later confirmed on Illyrian Bishops Assembly on which it was decided to take his bishop chair, he had never been punished. Although it was forbidden, he promoted priests and deacons constantly, propagating his knowledge which he has never rejected, not even after several conversations with Nikita, bishop of Remesiane (Bela Palanka town), posterior saint. According to letters of pope Inocentius to Niš bishop Markian (Martianus) we can see that in 409 AD Bonos was the bishop of Niš, while the other document from 414 AD justifies that then he was alive. About Markian we have no other information, but the above-mentioned letter.

Dalmatius (448–449 AD) was the bishop of Niš after Markian. About him we know only that he participated in so called "predatory" Assembly in Efes in 449 AD, when Flavianianus Assembly, which was kept in previous year, was attacked as well as patriarch Flavianus itself. However, many bishops from Illyria, among whom was

Dalmatius himself, were against monophysites. We do not know who the bishop was when Niš was completely destroyed by The Huns in 441 AD, but in 448 AD, same year when we found traces of Dalmatius, Byzantium writer Prisk went across Niš. Traveling on negotiations with Atila in diplomatic mission of Theodosius II, Prisk left the following description of one part of Niš which can be very interesting to us for further researches. In one part he said: "When we reached Niš we found a town completely deserted because it was demolished by the enemy. In church ruins there were some people who were there because of a disease. We slept in the open, not far from the river, because all river-coast has been covered with bones of people who died in a struggle".

Information that Prisk indicates here, that in the destroyed town there were churches in which some people have been spending time because of diseases, was very important. This testimony supports the assumption that Nais, as a bishop center, had a church or churches that had been dedicated herein especially to honored communal Christian martyrs. This fact is supported by some other sources like the text "Approval to the Saints", Sacrilegious Victoricius, bishop of a current Ruan in France, in which he, beside Rome, Constantinople, Antioch and Salonika, indicated Niš as a place where he has conserved relics of Christian religion victims. Even though he was writing in plural, St. Victoricius named only St. Procopius, whose cult of a protector of women and children had spread quickly and remained in the folk for a long time. Beside the cult of St. Procopius, Niš has had its parochial saints, which is proved by archaeological findings from the first half of 20th century. Over the eastern crypt wall, dating from the late 4th century, found in the part of Niš called Jagodin Mala, above the entrance there is the Monogram of Christ in a wreath of palm leaves, while the wall areas to the left and right of the entrance contain two male standing figures (one holds an open book, and other gives blessing). As a pendant to these presentations, the western wall contains the identical motive, believed to be standing for the Apostles Peter and Paul. Nowadays there are more and more arguments that these are images of parochial saints.

This assumption was substantiated with the presence of a martyrrium just several hundred meters western of the crypt, for which we shall say that it dated from the 3rd century.

Archaeological researches of Niš and its surrounding in the 20th century gave more than expected effects by giving us a picture of one economic, religious and political center of the Province Moesia Superior. Temples we are familiar with and which Prisk could see and describe, were located on the east bank of the Nišava River, in town area called "Jagodin Mala". In February 1933, on locality "Greek field" the basis of a church from the 4th century has been found. Dimensions of this temple were not small. It was 24,35 meters long and 10,40 meters wide. The temple entrance was on the western side between two marble columns, 3 meters strayed one from another. A pedestal of one column remained.

A temple which has been excavated also in 1933 was of much bigger proportion; the part that was excavated until then was 22 meters wide. According to the remains, this temple is also from the 4th century. We should also add to this group of temples the one found in Malošište in 1882, the basis of which was bigger than the basis of monastery Studenica. Some of the researchers thought that it was the monastery where the relics of St. Procopius had been kept. Unfortunately, while in first two temples many found objects indicated that the structures had been from the 4th century (as the coin with an icon of Constantine the Emperor), this Ćurlina temple did not relinquish similar arguments that would signify its age.

As in the second half of the 5th century, when the great number of the Province Moesia Superior's towns were ruined by the incursion of Huns, we do not have arguments that could document Dalmatius or some other bishop, it is very hard to have a clear picture of all the events that have been happening in this period over the geographic position of present Serbia. It is not surprising that we have learned about the next bishop of Niš - Gaianus not until 516 AD. He was the first orthodox Niš bishop after Gaudentius. It is known that he has accepted and admired the resolution of Fourth Chalcedonic Assembly. Strong antagonism of the monophysitism caused the Emperor

Athanasius to invite to Constantinople a group of Illyrian bishops - Alkison from Nikopol in Ephyre, Lavrentius from Ohrid, Dominic from Serdika (Sofia), Evangelical from Pautalia (Iustendil) and Gaianus himself. On that occasion these bishops were conforming to the Emperor Anastasias and repeated their disagreement with monophysit ideas. That was fateful for Alkison and Gaianus, considering the fact that they didn't come back from Constantinople to their bishoprics. Both of them were probably poisoned.

When in 518 AD strong earthquake struck settlement Ulpiana, where a church was raised, devoted to already considerably developed cult of St. Flora and Laura, Iustinianus the Great built other Iustiniana – Iustiniana Secunda on fundamentals of the existing settlement. Its first bishop Paul appeared in 553 AD on the Fifth Ecumenical Assembly, unanimously collaborating with Proiectus, the bishop of Niš. With the Novel from 14th April 535 AD, Justinian the Great founded archiepiscopate in his birthplace, which all Illyria episcopates were subordinated to (in the north until Niš, on east until Archer). The position and competence of this parochial unit were clearly constituted by the Novel 11 and 131.

The latest in a series of bishops in Niš in period we are dealing with was Proiectus for whom it is only known that he had been participant of the Fifth Ecumenical Assembly in Constantinople in 553 AD and on that occasion he expressed great loyalty to archbishop Benenatus with following words: "I consign with archbishop Benenatus and I respond to him". Otherwise, Proiectus himself did not take active participation in the Assembly working, but he was spending time at a Masencius. It is assumed that he did not dare to get into a dispute "Three chapters", because that implied direct opposing to Iustinianus the Emperor.

THE HUNS AND THE GOTHs IN NAIS

In the middle of the 5th century the life in Nais has completely died because of the chaos which The Huns (441 AD) at first, and

after them The Goths (471 AD) caused by demolishing the country.

One whole century Niš was on the margin of the events and mostly possessed by The Goths. Iustinianus I fortified the Empire's borders of the limiting value in period from 530 until 532 AD, restored Nais as strategically important place for the defense from the Slavic invasions, who passed by this region on their way to Thessalonica around 550 AD, and most likely demolished it completely.

The fall of the Byzantine Niš was determined by the end of money turnover in the town (612–614 AD). Approximately at this time the life of Illyrian towns started to fade away.

THE MIDDLE AGES

There are no known sources that can somehow witness about what has been happened in this area in the 7th and 8th century. Already in the 9th century, when near-by Bulgaria had began to expand itself territorially, Niš fell under Bulgarian authority. In the documents from the 10th century Niš bishopric has been mentioned as component part of the Bulgarian church. With the foundation of Samuel's empire in the second half of the 10th century, region of Niš became a component part of this empire, but visible changes did not come until the 11th century. The emperor of Byzantium Basil II (976–1025 AD) had badly defeated Samuel in 1014 AD and took over most of the territories which were in possession of this emperor – Niš was among them too. Basil II initiated renovation of the fortifications which were situated on important lines of communications, so Belgrade and Niš were completely recovered. Byzantium military crews were located there, and when conflicts had stopped, spiritual arrangements had started.

In the Imperial Edict from 1020 AD, issued by Basil II, there were listed all bishopric which were under Ohrid archiepiscopate, which had been the base of Byzantium policy in conquered countries. In this Edict, Niš episcopate is also mentioned, and it spreads from Sredačka eparchy (Sofia), until the borders of Braničevo archiepiscopate, along Gradsko Polje enclosing Mokro (near Bela Palanka), Prokuplje, Toplica and Svrlijig.

Frequent Anti-Byzantium rebellions were stimulated from Hungary or Bulgaria. In the year 1040 Petar Odeljan, supposed Samuel's offspring, financially supported from Hungary, took advantage of the dissatisfaction in the country and extinction of Byzantium central

command in order to organize a rebellion, moving along Pomoravlje, from Belgrade, across Niš to Skoplje. Even though it had big chances to succeed, the rebellion had been suppressed thanks to the disagreement of the leaders. After this incident Byzantium set up permanent military units in Niš and Belgrade.

In one moment Niš was in a center of intensive conflicts that appeared between Hungary and Byzantium over Illyrian area. After the struggle near Mancikert in 1072, which had been fatal for Byzantium, and after the capture of Emperor Romanus Diogenes, Hungary mobilized all troops and intensively attacked the Srem region. After that Hungary undertook several-month blockade of Belgrade. After the collapse of the defensive system on the Danube River and capitulation of Belgrade, Hungarians could go to the South, downward the Morava River, so they came to Niš very quickly, conquered and plundered the city. Together with large war trophy was the arm of St. Procopius, which had been found in the Church of St. Procopius, whose cult had been extremely respectable in this area. Hungarians had kept the arm of St. Procopius in the Church of St. Dimitrios in Sremska Mitrovica until the year 1164, when Manuel I Comnenos ordered the saint's arm to be returned to Niš and joined with the rest of the relics of the first saint of Niš, still kept in the Church of St. Procopius.

On Synod in Clermonu, in 1095, pope Urban II had at first initiated, and than called to war of the Crusaders against the Muslims in the Middle East. This call to the believers to free Christ's grave had as a backup plan to calm down the growing tension in Western Europe, which occurred due to the great number of hungry and dissatisfied people who saw possible profit in this foray. In that way a great number of people without land from France, Germany and surrounding countries moved toward hegemony of Peter the Ascetic. In the meantime, armed forces enlarged and became a real mercenary band, and plundered many towns on their way. In June 1096 they deceitfully killed more than 4000 people in Zemun, which forced Nikita, commander of Byzantium armies from Belgrade, to order retreat of his forces towards Niš, waiting for the imperial command. The fact that Byzantium armed forces abandoned ramparts of Belgrade and started

to retreat towards Niš "having faith only in the strength of the city's ramparts", as one Byzantium historian used to say, tells us about the defensive power of the Niš Fortress and its garrison.

By the first days of July 1096 armed forces of Peter the Ascetic crossed the Morava River and set up the camp not far from Niš. Shortly afterwards, a group of about thousand crusaders had run across the bridge toward the main gate of The Fortress, where the organized armed forces of garrison, Nikita's people from Zemun and inhabitants of Niš overruled them. Great number of them was killed at the crime scene or drowned in fast and deep Nišava River. According to the preserved data, 10000 people suffered and 2000 carriages, together with several carriages full of money, were ruined. Peter the Ascetic continued to move towards Sofia, and later groups of crusaders had been encountering the remaining Peter's armed forces in the fall of 1096 in the forests and villages near Niš. In next few years the city of Niš got a town commander who had had a title of a dux and who had managed a town in war and in peace. When in 1114 Niš was threatened by Kuman, who was attacking Byzantium from the North, the czar sent military reinforcements to Braničevo and Niš.

In the following period there were larger conflicts between Byzantium and Hungary. These conflicts had clearly shown that the defensive system of Middle Podunavlje and Pomoravlje was established according to the military organization of the Niš region. From 1048 the interest of Byzantium in the region of Niš and Ovčje polje was defended by Pechenez, nomadic nation of Turkish origin. Byzantium authority in Niš had stabilized itself after the Hungary - Byzantium war broke out in 1127 and after the truce, which came two years later (in 1129). Two emperors made an agreement that the border should stay unchanged, whereby Byzantium succeeded to defend its fortresses near Danube (Belgrade, Braničevo), while Zemun area was under the Hungarian authority. So the Byzantium authority was settled in Niš.

Czar Manuel I decided to attack Serbia one more time. At the end of the summer of 1150, great Byzantium armed forces preceded by Manuel I, gathered near Niš. Armed forces encamped northern

from Niš, out of the town, on the halfway to Sečanica village, precisely reported by Jovan Kinam. From that position Manuel I was managing all war operations in that year, while he didn't take part in any struggle. In those events Niš's captain Mihailo Vrana had a big role. He was known as one of the most important emperors of that time. According to the narrations of contemporaries, he was very skilled warrior, army leader with independent arbitration, who confidently got into fights with Serbs and knew very well their way of fighting. He participated in the crucial Serbian-Byzantium struggle which happened near the Tara River in Valjevo region in late autumn of 1150. Serbian - Hungary coalition suffered a terrible defeat and great head of the tribal state Uroš was forced to continue vassal relationship toward Byzantine czar. Niš had a very important role in Balkan policy of Byzantium in future ages.

Conflicts between Byzantium and Hungary lasted, with some short breaks, until 1155. Andronicus Comninuss, cousin of czar Manuel I Comnenos and subsequent czar, was nominated to carry out a duke function in Belgrade and Niš. Niš was the center of Byzantium policy towards Serbia during the 60s of the 12th century. Previously initiated expansion of Serbia could not been stopped, but only delayed. Czar Manuel I was coming to Niš quite often, in order to dismiss disobedient Serbian heads of a tribal state and change them with persons who would give more respect to extorted vassal relations. However, they were also continuing to struggle for independent countries and were keeping allied relationship with Hungary, which was understood in Istanbul as clear antagonistic act. Emperor Manuel I was in Niš in 1163 with its army, in order to force prefect to obedience. After Desa had rejected that, he was imprisoned and convicted.

After the invasion of Srem and returning the abducted arm of St. Procopius in Niš (in 1164), Manuel I ordered that the most important Byzantium fortress should be recovered, feeling that the time of serious conflicts was coming. The job was given to two most loyal persons – Constantine Angel and Vasilius Tripsih. Under their control the ramparts of Zemun, Belgrade, Braničevo and Niš were renovated. A former duke of Niš, Michael Vrana, distinguished himself in new

conflicts between Byzantium and Hungary (1166–1167) in Srem, but final blow to Hungary was given by Andronicus Kondostefan, who had brought armed forces from Constantinople via Niš and Belgrade.

In this period (1165) Stefan Nemanja entered the historical scene as prefect. Serbian rulers had the vassal obligations to Byzantine Emperor. According to the sustained system of authority, Nemanja was to rule over one part of Serbian countries (Toplica, Ibar, Rasina). Function of great prefect was performed by Nemanja's brother Tihomir. Byzantium Emperor Manuel I Comnenos had met Stefan Nemanja near Niš during one war campaign and gave him a court title called "the emperor's dream" and also gave him some land. So Nemanja got Dubočica (region around Leskovac), provided that it will be used by himself and his descendants. Later (in 1166) Nemanja took over the supremacy in Serbia from Tihomir, clearly showing the signs of dissatisfaction with Byzantine policy. He joined the opponents of Emperor Manuel.

In 1171 a big war broke between Byzantium and Venice. Trying to use Byzantium's fighting on several fronts trying to find the possibility of liberation of Serbia, Nemanja made connections with Venice, Germany and Hungary. Struggles broke out in Serbia. Serbian army was attacking more and more often the area along the road Belgrade-Braničevo-Niš. However, international circumstances were changed very soon. Venice had serious troubles during the sea war in 1172, and in the same year in Hungary Stefan III died, supposed to be inherited by Byzantium ward Bela III, who lived in Constantinople. Since he had lost an important ally, and knowing the fact that Manuel I has been going toward him with his army, Stefan Nemanja couldn't do anything except to surrender to the enemy. Manuel I took Stefan to Constantinople and used him as an example how all disobedient vassals would end. After a certain period of time he let Nemanja go back on function of great prefect under condition that he will not to rise up against him any more. Nemanja kept his promise and was a loyal vassal until the death of Manuel in 1180. However, in 1182, feeling the unsettled situation in Byzantium, as well as the struggles of Constantinople aristocracy for the throne diverted their attention from the

Balkans, Hungary attacks the towns on the Danube, Belgrade and Braničevo; from 1183 they got the help of Stefan Nemanja and his military units. Hungarian and Serbian armies invaded a country until Sofia. That was the first deep penetration of Serbian army on the Byzantium territory. When new Byzantium ruler Isak II Angel had come in family relations with Bela III, Nemanja looked for new protector in the struggle against Byzantium.

Since in Western Europe the idea of starting a crusade against Muslims in the Middle East revived, the most famous rulers offered their participation – king of England Richard Lionheart, king of France Philipp II August and czar of Germany Frederic I Barbarossa. When it turned out that only German army intended to throw over Hungary by land way, particularly through the Balkans countries, Stefan Nemanja decided to try to find the ally in German ruler for further struggle against Byzantium. Thus, he sent the ambassadors to Germany, who arrived to Frederic's court in Nuremberg in December 1188. According to the given instructions they presented a great satisfaction of Stefan Nemanja because of forthcoming emperor's route across his country. Nemanja informed the emperor in writing that he was preparing for him a formal reception in Niš, one of its most popular towns, which he intend to make a capital city of its country. It looks like Serbian delegates had offered favorable supplying conditions to Germany armed forces, as later events testify.

German armed forces started a campaign in summer 1189. Last days in June German emperor arrived in Belgrade and after a short rest he continued his route toward Braničevo. Byzantium military commander met him there. On their further way, the Crusaders were ranging on many troubles, as well as on impossible parts of the road. Serbian emissars helped German army while it was approaching Niš, and after that a very warm welcome to Frederic II Barbarossa and its escorts was prepared. Serbian ruler gave his best to receive his guest respectably. Nemanja and his brother Stracimir, together with huge escort, went to meet the most powerful European ruler. They brought presents which were exchanged in usual way. The negotiations started in Niš on 27th July 1189 and an agreement was made that if Germany

started with hospitalities against Byzantium, Serbia would help with 20.000 soldiers. On this occasion a marriage was arranged between Toljen, son of the duke Miroslav Humski - Nemanja's brother, and Berthold of Andeks' daughter who had been in king's escort in Niš and played an important role in Serbian-Germany negotiations. These days in Niš the representatives of Bulgarian leader Peter appeared as well, offering the German ruler military help for struggle against Byzantium. Frederic I Barbarossa didn't want any interventions over the Balkans because that would dissuade him away from the aim of his campaign, but he was satisfied with the agreement which was made. Stefan Nemanja saw him off and in autumn 1189 started out in Plovdivska Valley, not having any inkling that he will stay alone again in couple of months, because of the death of Germany emperor.

Byzantium czar emperor Isac II Angel returned the horrible attack. In the battle near Morava River in 1190, where he was the head of Byzantium army, he destroyed Stefan Nemanja and occupied Niš, which was mentioned in 1198 as a Byzantium town. According to the model of Manuel I Comnenos, Isak II Angel gave a life to Nemanja in condition not to organize rebellions. It is possible that the last military defeat forced Stefan Nemanja to divide land to his sons on synod in Ras and entered a monastic order. This great ruler died in monastery Hilandar in 1200 as monk Simeon.

Just after his death, Stefan came into a conflict with Vukan. In one document from that time it is mentioned that Vukan had been governing all Serbian country, maritime towns and areas around Niš. Bulgarian emperor, Kaloan took advantage of brothers' quarrel and conquered Niš in 1203. Kirik - bishop of Niš and Church of St. Procopius were mentioned in the constitution of Bulgarian church.

After emperor Kaloan's death his nephew Boril (1207-1218) took authority in Bulgaria. In this period internal struggles developed. Boril's brother Strez ran away to Serbia and got there protection and complete support of the Serbian ruler Stefan. Strez's residence was in Prosek town, beside Vardar River. His sujourney in Serbia had influenced Serbian-Bulgarian relationships which have been moving in the direction of an open hostility, especially from time when

Latin emperor Henrich (1206–1216) made the association with Boril by getting married to his daughter. Allies immediately turned their arms against Serbia with the aim to exile Stefan from the country, as Serbian ruler testified himself. At that time Niš was in Serbian authority and primary enemies' target. Gathered armies of Bulgarian ruler and Latin emperor broke out in 1214 until Niš. Strez left Stefan and joined the rivals of the Serbian ruler. He attacked countries in higher course of the River Vardar. The way of following operations is unknown. It is known that invaders were defeated near Niš, and Strez was killed soon.

However, in spring of 1215, Serbia was again in danger because emperor Henrich asked for new ally in the struggle against Stefan Nemanjić. This time it was Hungarian king Andria II (1205–1235). According to detailed agreement, two rulers with their armies should have met in Niš and then started to move against great Serbian prefect.

Stefan Nemanjić was invited to the meeting as well. Noticing all the misfortunes which would bring joining of opposing forces from Niš, he tried to break this union by negotiations with Hungarian king. With that aim, an important meeting between Serbian ruler and king Andria was organized in town Ravno (current Čuprija). Stefan Nemanjić wrote that he had been twelve days at that meeting, whose results were favorable for Serbia – Hungary king didn't join Stefan's rival. Two rulers started to move towards Niš, where they met emperor Henrich who was ready to extort a profit by force. However, Henrich had to retreat with unfinished business, because Hungary didn't enter the war.

Relationships with Hungary became additionally complicated from 1202 when Hungarian king brought his official title to Serbia, for the favors he had done to Vukan in the struggle with Stefan for ascending/inheriting the throne. This meant that king of Hungary had certain rights in Serbia and he insisted on that. Because of that the coronation of Stefan Nemanjić by king's crown, received from Rome 1217, resulted with great anger in Budim beside the fact that Hungary had got legitimacy at the proper time just in this way. Hungary

became angry by giving Serbia independence in so great extent that it was ready to begin open war, which was avoided thanks to mediation of Sava Nemanjić.

It is known that Nicodim was the bishop in Niš in 1279. With the conquests of king Milutin (1282–1321) and especially his policy according to Bulgaria, Niš preceded below Serbian authority by the end of the 13th and beginning of the 14th century. Milutin's son, king Stefan Uroš III Dečanski (1321–1331), at the end of his rule found himself on percussion of anti-Serbian coalition which was concluded by Bulgarian emperor Mihailo and Byzantium emperor Andronicus III. Handle not to wait to be attacked, Stefan Dečanski had gathered armed forces in July 1330 at Dobrič Polje, near Prokuplje town, and inflicted a defeat on Bulgarians at Velbužd, current Čustendil on 28th July 1330. Bulgarian emperor Mihailo died in this battle. Stefan Dečanski received Bulgarian legation in Bela Palanka and granted their request for peace. Thereupon he has stayed in Niš, which has become the part of Stefan Dečanski's Serbia.

In spring of 1333 "queen lady, wife of Bulgarian czar" instructed the goods of two retailers from Dubrovnik in amount of 200 perpers to be dispossessed. The question is definitely about queen Ana, sister of Serbian king Stefan Dečanski. She and her son were driven from a throne in Bulgaria (1331) and hereupon retreated herself in Niš. Afterward she went to Dubrovnik.

All the way during the reign of Stefan Dušan (1331–1355) Niš was under Serbian authority. Niš and its districts were in authority of Duke Lazar Hrebeljanović in 1372, when he became one of the most powerful district rulers. Districts around the River Zapadna Morava with Užice town and districts of Rudnik, Braničevo and Kučevo gained duke Lazar according to the conquest over Nikola Altomanović in 1373 and Radić Branković Rastislavić in 1379. In pre-Kosovo state Niš, Kruševac Užice, Novo Brdo and Rudnik were in his power. Duke Lazar assumed central role in the state defense. Turkish strengths broke into Pomoravlje in 1381. This attack was rejected with great difficulty by two commanders in chief from Prince Lazar's landowners. Second invasion of the Turks, in 1386,

was stronger and more organized. Lazar had succeeded to stop Turkish invasion in battle over Pločnik in Toplica Region, but at the same time he lost Niš. In that way Lazar's army had in its background forfeited town full three years. The Kosovo battle in 1389, which had been crucial in many ways for the future progress of Serbian history, significantly marked a long-range agony in which Serbia was after Dušan's death.

Niš again fell under Serbian authority at the beginning of the 15th century. After participation in the Angora battle (1402) on Bajazit I's side, despot Stefan Lazarević restored below its influence Pirot and Niš about 1404. Because of that at the same year Sultan Sulejman asked for the accordance from him to go through this region. However, Vuk Branković, who had the support of new Sultan Musa (1411–1413), big enemy of despot Stefan Lazarević who had been loyal to Sulejman, took over Niš in 1409 after a five-year conflict. With arrival of Mehmed I on Turkish throne (1413–1421) Despot Stefan Lazarević gained to direct with Niš, Znepolje (land about Bulgaria border) and Koprijan, which found themselves after ten years again in constitution of Serbia.

Already in 1425 Serbian domain of a Despot and Hungary tried to sign an anti-Turkish coalition. Murat II, Sultan at that time, reacted very fast in so much that Niš was devastated same year beside else several big towns from Serbia. The attack of Turkish troops against domain of a Despot was much more organized in the summer of 1427. Across Niš Turks broke out in Pomoravlje, fulfilled with panic fear because of the sudden death of Despot Stefan Lazarević. Kruševac, Golubac and some other small places beside the River Morava and the Danube fell under Turkish authority in quick-fire. Whole Serbia was already defeated in 1439.

Despot Đurađ Branković succeeded to initiate war against Turks in Hungary, who wanted to eliminate danger from any anti-Turkish coalition preceded by Hungary. On forehead of Christian armies, composed with border guard force of Serbs from Banat, in autumn of 1443 officially was Hungarian king Vladislav, while the real emperors were Đurađ Branković and Janko Hunjadi. First

collision with Turkish army happened on 3rd November 1443, among Aleksinac and Niš, where king Vladislav spend his time after the first achieved conquest. After several month of militancy in winter conditions, Christian armed forces defeated Turkish forces over mountain Kunovica on 2nd January 1444 when it has already been forced to retreat itself. When it came back to Belgrade by the end of January, armed forces left behind it all places which had been temporarily liberated and relinquished them to reviewed Turkey occupation.

After many short and ineffectual actions below government of Janko Hunjadi and other Serbian heroes, after the overthrow of Constantinople 1453, Mehmed II began to break off relations with Serbia. Offering the resistance for five years Smederevo and medieval Serbian nation fell in Turks' slavery in 1459 which will last for consecutive four and a half centuries.

PERIOD UNDER TURKS OCCUPATION, TILL 1878 (1459-1878)

Right at the beginning of sultan Bayazit II's rule (1481–1512), in consequence of administrative partition of conquered territories and easier law guidance, particular administrative union (district) was established in Niš. After the constitution of authority in the city, first thing was the registration of inhabitants in order to impose taxes. Thanks to these registrations, it is known that in 1498 district of Niš had around 33000 inhabitants, and most of them were orthodox Serbs. This number will be reduced during the next registration in 1516, because of the plague which has devastated Turk's empire, so the number of inhabitants was 32000. Drastic reduction of inhabitants in Niš district was recorded in 1564 - it was between 22000 and 25000 inhabitants. The inhabitants' obligations were written in document named The Law of Niš, made in 1498, and modified in 1516.

At the first time, most of the inhabitants in Niš were Serbs, in minor percentage – Gypsies, Vlachs, Turks. Later, with trade expansions and Sulejman the Great's conquests, the number of inhabitants started to grow – there were Muslim and first Jewish families registered in the statement from 1584, which point at one colony in Niš, made by a merchants from Dubrovnik. Colony had its own priest and almost 200 people.

Until 17th century, we noticed the state buildings in Niš: the Fortress, sultan Murat's mosque and the bridge. These buildings were registered by the writers of travels, traveling from West Europe to Constantinople – Felix Petranich (1512) from Dubrovnik, Kornelius Duplitius Sheper (1533) from Austria, Benedetto Ramberti

(1534) from Venice, Antun Vrančić (1553), Hans Dersvam (1553), Stefan Gerlah (1573)... etc. Most of these writers of travels, passing by through these regions on their trips to Sofia and Constantinople, were deputies from European courts with one single task: to example the position of the Balkans under Turk's occupation, and according to those reports, create selfdefence.

Beside above mentioned buildings, almost all writers of travel were giving the examples about the existence of one orthodox log-church, and at the end of the 16th century there were only eight living and seven forsaken monasteries in Niš district. According to the first registration from 1498, there were 14 living and 11 forsaken monasteries. That was a good indicator that high taxes and difficult life conditions had much influenced everyday life of Niš and the region.

Inhabitants of Dubrovnik maintained trade relationships with Niš. Inhabitants of Niš presented their products through Dubrovnik, especially since the second half of 16th century. At the first time, inhabitants of Niš engaged in handcrafts that didn't need workshops. Manufacture of wax, soap, leather and rope was highly esteemed. In this period rice was the most cultivated plant in Niš region.

War between Austrians and Turks broke out at the end of 17th century (1683–1699). Turning-point in this war was unsuccessful Kara – Mustafa's descent to Wiena in 1683. In the same time, there were series of local insurrections, that had one goal – to put out of order Turk's rule. Rebellions stopped in 1699, after signing the agreement in Karlovac. In that time (1687–1690) Niš had survived many burnings and demolitions, like many other towns in Serbia. The culmination of Austrian aspiration to penetrate deeper inside Turkey through the River Morava, was realized in September 25th 1689, after short battles with Niš Fortress garrison; Austrian markcount Ludwig von Baden conquered Niš with his 17000 soldiers. Austrians held Niš under occupation for one year. At the beginning of 1690, Italian engineer Peroni made a concept for restoring a half destroyed Fortress. After long and heroic defending of the city from Turks, Austrian garrison was forced to capitulate and give in the city. On September 9th 1690, Austrian general Sthomberg signed the capitulation.

Sultan Mustafa II had three military campaigns from 1695 to 1697, and because of that, taxes were enlarged many times. That stopped on 11th September in 1697, when the battle at Senta decided the result of this war. Sultan Mustafa II was in Niš on July 29th to see the stage of destroyed fortification and the way of its restoration.

The period of Turk's revenge started. Numerous revolutions through Pomoravlje were brutally stopped and the organizers were severely punished. So, at the end of 17th century, Serbs organized series of migrations to the north, through the River Danube, to Srem, where they would join to Austrian royal army against the Turks. Migration with a greatest number of Serbs to Vojvodina's regions was the one that patriarch Arsenije IV Čarnojević organized. Those garrisons had a great role in the war with the Turks until the middle of 18th century.

Signing the Agreement of Karlovac in 1699 indicated remodeling of Turk's administrative unions. In that way Niš became part of Belgrade's province, and had status of city-fortification, with a primary purpose – to defend this part of province from rebels. When Turkey, although still unprepared, declared war to Russia in 1710, having small success in the battle on the River Prut in 1711, and started the war against Austria, that came back badly to itself. At the head of Austrian army was Eugen de Savay, who defeated Turks at Senta in 1697. At the beginning of 1717, panic became ruler between Muslims which started to retreat downstream the Morava River until Niš. Some of them continued to escape, and sultan Ahmed II tried to stop that with different promises.

In series of victories Eugen de Savay got back Temishvar with Banat, and in June 1717 the pursuers were closing in around Belgrade, which came to Austrian hands in the same year. After the English and Netherlands' intervention, war was ended by peace agreement, signed in Požarevac on July 21st 1718. After losing Temishvar and Belgrade, Turk's government gave the role of boundary cities to Niš and Vidin, and in the same time Niš became residence of a Rumelian Elayet until the new war between Austrians and Turks (1737–1739). In this period, the importance of Niš, as the most prominent custom - duty department on a road toward Constantinople and Thessalonica,

significantly contributed to the development of the city. Numerous armies, landowner working in Fortress, highly royal clerks, all of them had influence upon Niš to become more luxuriant in many buildings that provided rooms for merchants and their goods. Many Jews were coming to the city that became a borough because of the migration, creating their own settlement on the right side of the Fortress's bridge. Tzintzars and Greeks were coming as well. All of them had the majority of coffee and broadcloth trade in Niš.

Right after the war broke out, on 27th July 1737, Niš was captured by Austrian marshal De Tungen and his army. As many times before, Niš had been held by Austrians for short time; thanks to changeable success in battles, garrison of Niš capitulated on 18th October the same year. Next two years, till the end of war between Austria and Turkey, the Turks used Niš as a place for gathering the army to attack regions on North. Belgrade peace agreement signed on 18th September 1739 established the border on Sava and Danube rivers, and Niš being the biggest fortification city in restored Belgrade province and got the special status. Niš started to become larger; being administrative center of few districts, it was built mostly by trade and handcrafts. At the end of the 18th century, town started to spread, and in the same time its inhabitants were expressing their discontents because of the way of Turkish ruling. Being impoverished by many wars, government burdened people with high taxes so the written complaints were traveling from Niš to Constantinople more often. In the first few years of 19th century envy, insurrections and slayings rule between Turks in Niš and Serbia.

NIŠ AND SERBIAN REVOLUTION 1804-1815

Just after battle at Ivankovac in summer of 1805, Serbs started to join the revolution that had taken place on the north of Serbia. Temporary liberation of Toplica with Kuršumlija and Prokuplje, then Svrlijig and Knjaževac in 1806, led by Đorđe Petrović Karađorđe, attracted many inhabitants of Niš that had crossed the border at

Deligrad. Inhabitants of Niš and Leskovac joined the revolution till March 1807. Attacks of Serbian army on the territory of Niš became more often, and peace agreement in Slobzitsko, signed under Russian pressure to stop battles on Serbian and Turkish frontline around Niš, was broken. In 1809 there were more conflicts, heroes and victims.

From 27th of April until 31th of May 1809 Serbian army besieged Niš, but didn't have much visible success. Although Serbian army had some small victories in surrounding villages and in sporadic battles toward the Čegar Hill, final success failed to come. Losing strategic initiative, Serbs dig in themselves in the north side of Niš with numerous ramparts. This strategy completely slowed down Serbian army and provoked distemper between dukes. When the Turks, going from Sofia, broke Veljko Petrović's garrison, and continued towards Niš, while at the same time, 7000 Turks had moved from Leskovac, it was clear that Serbian army didn't have much hope. Determinated battle lasted for two days on 30th May and 31st of May 1809. 20000 Turks attacked and round 4000 Serbs were at the opposite side. Second day of desperate battle, Stevan Sindelić seeing that Turkish army invaded, shot at the powder - magazine. This explosion took 3000 Serbian and 7000–9000 Turkish lives. Commander of city ordered to cut, flay and put the heads of dead Serbs in mortar. This building, which needed to frighten the inhabitants of Niš, named Čele-kula (Skull-Tower), during next centuries became a symbol of Serbian resistance. Austrian sources registered that after these event 5000–6000 refugees from Niš, Pirot and Vranje came to the River Sava coast.

Serbian army arrived to Aleksinac, not far away from Niš, in autumn 1809, and Đorđe Petrović with 3000 soldiers came to Niš, but couldn't do anything serious, so he retreated. In that period, Niš was moved from the focus of events.

When Miloš Obrenović restarted the revolution in 1815 in Belgrade province, Niš had stayed aside. Turkish pressure on local inhabitants was hard, but that haven't stopped them to maintain the connection with rebels in Serbia, and in the same time to make, renew and fortify trade relations with Jagodina, Kragujevac, Požarevac and Belgrade on the north, and Leskovac and Skopje on the south.

The great revolution in Greece in 1821 made strong echoes on neighbour countries. Bishop from Niš Melentije, being of Greek origin, tried to organize a revolution in Niš. The conspiracy has been disclosed soon; 200 rebels were arrested and put into the Fortress prison, and Melentije was hanged on the Fortress Bridge on Easter 1821 with five more distinguished men. Venedict I became new church superior, and after him, until the liberation of Niš in 1878, bishops of Niš were Danilo, Josif, Georgius, Venedict II, Nićifor, Ionakius and Kalinik. Otherwise, eparchy of Niš was a part of restored Pećka patriarchate until 1776 when it came under the jurisdiction of Constantinople's patriarchate. After the liberation of the city, it came back to Serbian Orthodox Church.

Because of giving support to Greek rebels, Moskopolje in North Albania and dozen more settlements in Kosovo, Metohija and Macedonia were destroyed in 1821. That caused larger migration to the north. In those years, in many bigger towns of Serbia, Greek – Tzintzar – Jew element came, and in the next decade, especially after the liberation, built the city of Niš. In the next period, inhabitants of Niš turned to themselves – making cultural and trade relationship stronger. In 1827 they asked Duke Miloš Obrenović to send them a teacher, so the first teacher in Niš – Spiridon Jovanović came soon. Families Hristoduly, Kocić and Harisijades were his financial support. At that time, Jews' part of town gets its final form, spreading out on a left coast of the Nišava River, right from the Fortress Bridge, same as Greek – Tzintzar's part, clearly seen on the city map dating from 1878.

After the revolution in East Serbia and Russia's interventions in 1833 Serbian – Turkish border came near by Niš on the south. Plague epidemic hit the city and its environs in autumn 1837 and was taking lives till the end of 1838. In one day 126 people died in Pirot, and duke Miloš's doctor wrote that in Niš, which had hardly 30000 inhabitants, more than a hundred people died every day. The plague took numerous lives at the end of 1838 and significantly reflected on everyday life of the citizens.

In January 1835, as the result of the Turkish terror, sixteen villages around Niš raised. Many people came across the border and went to Serbia, and conflict has been solved by moving Turks from those villages. It's important to say that duke Miloš Obrenović help the rebels, having an agreement with some Turks for peaceful negotiations and afterwards for peaceful solution of the situation at the beginning of summer in 1835. When the number and quantity of taxes increased, another revolution with bigger proportion had been organized.

Inhabitants of Niš, Leskovac, Vlasotince, Pirot and Prokuplje organized so called Revolution of Niš in 1841. Miloje Jovanović, Nikola Srndak, Stojan Cavdar and Srećko Atanacković were at the head of rebels. Rebels gathered from 3rd until 5th of April 1841, and synchronized actions in Pirot, Bela Palanka, Grdelica and Gornji Matejevac near Niš started the next day. Although the rebels were together, duke Mihailo Obrenović did not give his help, because he mustn't come into this kind of conflicts. Last battle took place on 24th of April, when the revolution had been stopped in bloodshed.

Life went on. The first masculine/feminine school has been opened in 1845 and Anastasia Nasta Dimitrijević from Prizren had been teaching there. She was teaching in our schools until 1874. In this period, villages round Niš got their own teachers: in 1847 Damjan Mitrović was teaching in Kamenica and G. Matejevac. After him, Dimitrije Hadži Pesić and Jovan Popović were teachers in Gornji Matejevac and probably in Kamenica. When Muthad-pasha's rule enlightened, new trade school was established in 1865, with four grades and 179 Orthodox and Muslim students. He gave the idea for the first city library; it was built in 1868. Two-grade high school was established in 1873 and that had been the biggest success in the educational system.

In these years Cherkeses colonized Niš, and also the Tatars – more the 2000 families in 1873. There were also Arnauts, serving in Turkish army as very moveable equestrian forces; they settled in a part of town known as Arnaut Pazar; in the place of today's shopping center "Kalča".

Among active people commandants Nikola Kole Rašić started to excel. He took part in bombarding of Belgrade in 1862. He secretly brought books from Serbia to Niš and organized many activities against the Turks. Nevertheless, not until 24th of February 1874 the Committee for deliverance was established, with eminent members – Kole Rašić (leader of rebels), Todor Milovanović, Todor Stanković etc. Petar Ikonomović, the priest of Niš, made formal oath for rebels "to fight against five century blood-suckers loyally and fraternally". Committee worked on gathering people, guns and ammunition, transmitting important information from Belgrade, and transporting books and other education materials from liberated to non-liberated parts of Serbia. Committee enlarged its influence from Leskovac, Vranje, Prokuplje, Pirot, Vlasotince to Priština, Peć, Prizren, Vučitrn and Gnjilane, by order of duke Milan Obrenović. In 1875, when revolution in Herzegovina started, and Serbia got a warning not to expand the territory to the west, because that wouldn't be tolerated by Austria, duke Milan decided to direct military activity towards the liberation of Old Serbia.

The first war between Serbia and Turkey started in June 1876 and had shown unreadiness of Serbian army, which quickly conquered, but faster lost towns in East Serbia, so after the defeat of Serbian army near Ćunis, on 1st September 1876. General Tscherniaev asked duke Milan to demand a mediation of Russian emperor. After the Russia's ultimatum, Turks army stopped further operations, and in February 1877, after a few months of agreement, peace was declared. Borders were determinated on the principles of unchanged status before the war operations (*status quo ante*). It was clear that it had been purchasing time for both sides.

Nevertheless, in late autumn of 1877 Serbian government has again activated secret relations with eminent people from Niš, Leskovac, Vranje, Prokuplje, Pirot, and that showed a new possibility of war. On December 13th 1877 Serbia declared war to Turkish Empire, and Moravski battalion, under general Milojko Lešjanin's command, should capture Niš. Russian forces on Plevna got into a hard situation,

and Russian emperor Alexander II asked duke Milan for help, in order to make Russian army easier pass over mount Balkan round Sofia.

Prokuplje was liberated on 18th December, like many villages in Pomoravlje (Mramor, Kočane, Pukovac, Čečina). On 23th December Vlasotince and Leskovac were liberated, same as Bela Palanka on 24th December, and four days later liberation came to Pirot. After the bombardment of the fortification on the Gorica Hill, Niš was liberated on 8th January 1878. Members of the Committee got medals for the credits in national work and liberation movement: Todor Stanković – Takovo cross of IV grade; Kole Rašić – Takovo cross of V grade.

FROM THE LIBERATION OF THE TURKS UNTIL BEGINNING OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR (1878–1941)

Just after the liberation of Niš on 9th January 1878, and establishing the government mechanism in liberated parts, on 3rd March 1878, Saint Stefan's pact was signed in order to make possible to Russia an exit to a warm sea, annexing Niš to new established Kingdom of Bulgaria. Serbs reacted quickly. Knowing that Russia wouldn't give up imposed creation of eastern Serbian borders, duke Milan Obrenović and foreign minister Jovan Ristić turned to Austria and Hungary, which wanted an exit to a warm sea too, but also a possibility of neutralizing Serbian influence on events over Drina River and in Montenegro. Thus on Berlin's congress (from 13th June until 13th July 1878) the agreements from Saint Stefan's congress were checked so Serbia got all of territories that it had liberated. In that time, on July 8th the convention was signed and verified in 1881. Duke Milan demanded of Austria and Hungary, among other things, railway from Belgrade to Niš, with spur tracks to Vranje and Pirot. After many unwanted economic and political situations, the first train to Niš, made of two compositions, each of them had nine wagons, started on 4th September 1884. It came round 6 p.m. after ten hours of ride.

In the middle of 1878, Niš was caught by a great fire. Dry straw roofs burned into flame on high temperature, and the final result of this strong fire, which swallowed almost all so called Covered borough (part of the city from the Cathedral, over Obrenovićeva Street to King Milan's square) and Synagogue built 1695, was reflected in creating of town-planning project and widening of streets. Foundation

of a new Synagogue, that still exists, was made on 18th May 1924. Big Cathedral was opened in 1878, and had been built by rich merchants' and other citizens' donations. Opening ceremony was delayed for an indefinite period of time because of the indications of recent liberation.

After the liberation of Serbia's territory, having Niš for a centre, Turks' pieces of land were sold in low prices very quickly. Strong base of future economy in Niš and Serbia was created by enlarge handcrafts workshops. Niš was ready for challenges that freedom had brought, and King Milan Obrenović spends more time in his favorite city, starting to treat it as alternative capital of Serbia. National assembly of Serbia was in session on 21st November 1879 and royal family – duke Milan, princess's Natalija and heir to the throne Alexander Obrenović were there. Milan expressed his great pleasure with fact that assembly was in sessions in "famous town Niš". National assembly was in session in Niš since 1879 till 1880 and since 1883 till 1886, and in that time Niš really was second capital of Serbia. On 13th November 1886 National assembly was in session in first primary school "Saint Sava" building in Cathedral's yard, and had adopted Law on establishing Serbian Royal Academy. Milan Obrenović's permission on Establishing the Academy says: "On education and religion Minister's suggestion, and after consulting Minister council, we decided: *To entitle our education and religion minister for giving the suggestion for basic law on Serbian Royal Academy to the Parliament convoked in 1886.*

Chief of education and religion ministry needs to accomplish this declaration. This text is also in a mission statement: *National government will always listen to the Royal Academy opinion on giving, maintaining, suggesting, the state's assistance to doctor's, aet's, technical's, law's, teaching's, archaeological's, religious' or national and education's societies, and also to the societies for literary and science practice".*

Beside the Parliament sessions, International congress of wine – growing took place in Niš in 1888, and Synod of Serbian Orthodox Church was in session in 1889. Metropolitan Michael was the

chairman, and they discussed question of church reforms. In this period of time, Austria and Hungary, Russia, Germany, Turkey, England, Greece, France, Italy and Belgium had their own consulates in Niš.

Trade is in progress. There were many shops from Duke's court to Princess's fountain – Adrović brothers had 25 shops, Jovan Kocić 11, Mihailo Terzibašić 10, Adamušević brothers and Jovanović brothers 7, Jakup Mustafić 6, Rista Bojdžić and Tasko Radojković 5, Gavriilo Smiljanić – Jovanović, Đorđe Radojković and Spira Jović 4, etc. Twelve persons owned 93 shops, and in that part of the city there were 293 shops in total. In this time, Niš was a great market place for selling goods from East as well as the ones brought from West by railway. There were so many goods: Delja brothers were selling flour from their own mill, Nicolas Hristodulu was selling textile-materials, Panayoth Delja was offering first-class leather goods from Austria and Hungary and Turkey, Đorđe Janković was selling materials embroidered with golden threads for quilts and slippers, shirts, rose perfumes, broches, tobacco pipes, jewels and "other Constantinople goods". Popić brothers and Manojlović brothers's shops were specialized for selling manufacture's goods, blankets and fancy goods, and the other shops sell iron, porcelain, glass, paper, leather, shoes, optical products and hammer – smith materials.

Understanding great possibilities for industrial development, Jovan Apel, owner of small brewery in Aleksinac, bought six hectares of Niš land, and built a real brewery in 1884. In 1886 Mita Ristić established workshop for cotton manufacture. It will become a textile – materials factory, named "Mitić & son", than "Ratko Pavlović" and "Nitex" after the end of Second World War.

Great progress of Niš influenced on establishing of first few saving-banks. A group of eminent city trade merchants established Stock savings-bank of Niš on 25th November 1884. They gave that name because they wanted to use good reputation of saving-bank in that time, although that was stock bank with personally payed capital. Chairman of the board was pharmacy owner Athila Okolichany. Đoka S. Nešić, prominent merchant in Niš, A. Harmijadis, Dim. Nikolić, Ilija Miletić, Dimitrije J. Kocić, Karlo Materni, Nikola J. Jarendi,

Stefan T. Hristodulo, A. Pečaković i Mihailo H. Nešić, were members and chairman of the board in 1888 was Đoka S. Nešić. Stock saving-bank of Niš started to set aside a certain sum of money for establishing the cotton spinning mill. The report of industrial section was read on the Parliament session in 1910, according to the requirement of stock-bank of Niš. Stock-bank's members asked to receive a license for spinning of raw cotton and for knitting of different sorts of materials. At the same meeting there was decided that the requirement should be partly respected and »wanted terrain could be given gratis only if it would exist«. Certainly, Cotton-mill started to work, as first of that kind in Serbia, according to the management of A. Abenšoam, member of the Savings-bank's administrative committee, who was set as supervisor of the factory. Mill was working relatively good, mostly invested "in constructive objects and machinery so that theirs amounts, only in 1913, increased for 6165 dinars", and before the beginning of the First World War Mill had over 100 employees, 6000 spindles and produced yearly about 50000 bales of England cotton per 10 pounds each one.

There should be mentioned that first Niš Freemasons had been gathering around stock savings-banks. They will establish Freemasons' lodge called "Nemanja" with Đoka S. Nešić as its first president. The eminent members of this stock savings-bank from "Nemanja" were Karlo Materni, Spira Kalik and Stevan Sremac. After this stock savings-bank, in 1888 there was established the Cooperative Niš for mutual helping and savings and in 1889 Serbian – Jews' trade society was established. In next few years will be established Niš commercial and sale bank (1891), and at the beginning of XX century Niš bank (1904).

In order to acquire capital and to provide a higher profit to its stockers some of those banks beside regular bank jobs worked on economy businesses too, and the most profitable was trade. So Niš commercial and sale bank offered from its wine cellars quality, well-conserved and pure one year old white wine from Niš and Vranje. The most typical example of exaggerating was Niš Bank to whom Ministry of national economy refused to give permission for establishing

in 1902 with the explanation that there had already been four monetary institutes. According to the stockers' idea additional aggravating circumstances for establishing of this bank, was that bank should do more than fifteen different kinds of jobs.

It is very hard to imagine the inhabitants of Niš reaction about the information about Alexander and Draga Mašin death, considering the fact that relationship between inhabitants of Niš Milan Obrenović as well as toward its son Alexander was unusually familiar for the relationship ruler-dependent. Most of inhabitants refused to remove black flags that had been hanged on gates or above entrances of stores. At the end of May 1903 king Petar I Karađorđević came in Niš and by personal support he succeeded to prevent further tension on South Serbia.

One dynasty had gone, the other came, and life went on.

Serbian - Jews' trade society had acquired machinery and established the Electric joiner's factory in 1909. The factory had permanent capital of 150000 dinars until the Balkan warfare (1912) while the value of Electric joiner's factory and Agent Department of Serbian - Jews' trade society was 279520 dinars. As all the others monetary institutes Serbian - Jews' trade society was hardly destroyed during First World War and liquidated in 1921.

There are some more examples of Niš monetary institutes investments in economy with main aim to increase dividend of their stockholders – Niš society for mutual assistance and providence raised the Factory for white bricks and ceramics dms producing and Niš bank established Leather Factory in 1910.

Thanks to the railroads which had started to spread themselves from Niš to Romania and Bulgaria, there began very fast development of the export capacities of Niš and Serbian economy. Niš merchants were especially directed on two markets – in Salonika and Genova, especially when tensions between Serbia and Bulgaria were more and more expressive. In period of the customs war (1906) with Austria – Hungary instead of expected extinction of Serbian economy there happened in Niš totally opposite thing. By pushing into the background the products that came from Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and making 2/3 of products on Niš market, there was made space for own

investments. That was used more than good by establishing nine bigger or smaller companies. So creating of first hydroelectric power station "St. Paraskeva" in Sićevo Gorge near Ostrovica was in preparation in 1906. First hydroelectric power station started to work in 1909 and till nowadays it has been producing electric power with the original equipment, and is also in system of Electric Industry of Serbia. That was the base for building new factories – 1907 Footwear Factory of Vladimir Dimitrijević, 1908 Factory for shaw knitting and printing of Mita Ristić, 1909 First Serbian Factory of powdered rennet and liquids of Đoka Dimitrijević and Electric carpenter's society of Serbian - Hebrew businessman society, in 1910 Mita Ristić constructed Textile factory with 200 looms. At the same year there was established Hamp Factory of Jovanović and Arandelović, while Niš stock savings-bank established Cotton Spinning Mill and Electrified Mill. Twenty five well-situated citizens had bought brewery of Jovan Appel and formed Brewer's community "Apelovac" in 1910 in the name of increasing beer production. In former years there were established: Brick kiln Factory and Automatic Mill of Regional bank (1911), Factory for bags and suitcases of Držajić and Šurdilović, Steam Automatic Mill of Nikola Cvetković and sons, there was also established a new brick kiln of Jovanović, Živković and Popović (1912).

Above-all in 1911 there had been established The Assembly of Niš industrialists whose first foremost chairman was Petar Stanković. In Salonika was exported Niš beer and flour from Steam Mill "Constantine" of brother Popović while the Automatic Mill of Regional Bank was exporting meal in Turkey.

Demographic structure of inhabitants was very mixed in period from 1878 till 1890, while fast increase of population was noted in last decade of XIX century.

Year of inventory	Municipal citizens	Rural citizens	TOTAL
1878	12801	23927	36728
1884	16178	22689	38867
1890	19877	31439	51316

Beside Serbian population there were: Jews, Tzintzars, Germans, Gypsies, Italians, Turks, Hungarians, Frenchmen, etc. On Vinter's plan of Niš it could be clearly noticed Jews' but also a couple of Tzintzars' Districts where had been situated schools after the liberation. After the liberation and in first decade of XX century number of new primary and secondary schools increased except the Jews' School which had worked separately and which education had been organized according to the needs of Jews' Commune.

Stevan Sremac was living and creating in this period in Niš. He is the author of well-known deeds: "Zona Zamfirova" and "Ivkova Slava" and one of the founders of first Niš theatre "Sindelić" (formed in 1883). He was also in connection with the opening Public Library, which was established 1879. For the first time he also work in it. Painters Đorđe Krstić, Moša Šoamović and Stefan Nikšić – Lala were creating in this period. Literary life in town was enriched in 1900 by publishing literary journal "Gradina" which first editor was Jeremija Živanović.

Political life in Serbia was as rich as cultural or economic, even though it was much slower in comparison with political life of Serbia till 1878. We should have in mind the fact that Niš had been second capital of Serbia till 1903 by desert of Obrenovićs' dynasty where Serbian Parliament was sitting. Because of that Niš was considered to be stronghold of Jovan Ristić's Liberal party (which was giving the support to the policy of dynasty) whose members from Niš were Stevan Sremac, Živan Živanović, Nikola Kole Rašić, Todor Stanković and another. After the Timok uprising (1883) and Serbian - Bulgarian war (1885) the influence of Radical Party decreased but not for a long time. With proclaiming new constitution and King Milan's abdication on 22nd February 1889 in sake of its minor son Alexander Obrenović there was formed deputy's office which prescribed to the radicals forming of new government. Until the attempt on Alexander Obrenović and Draga Mašin in 1903 Serbian court was the center from which operated Liberal Party which reflected over Niš, but the situation would be changed on first consecutive elections organized under the Petar I Karađorđević. Two more very important parties appeared in Niš – independent radicals and socialist so on Parliamentary elections in 1908 most numbers of votes had received radicals,

then independent radicals, liberals and socialists while the sequence of the election results on last elections in 1912 before the Balkan wars and First World War was: liberals, radicals, socialists and independent radicals.

FIRST WORLD WAR

After The Balkans wars, which were not significantly reflected to life in Niš, there broke out First World War. The Government of Serbia and the Parliament moved into Niš on July 1914 because of an immediate danger. Katarina – Klara Šturceneger from Switzerland noted the increase of inhabitants in Niš owing to Belgrade bombarding. Niš, which had about 30000 inhabitants before the war, in August of 1914 had 80000 inhabitants. Niš was the war capital of Serbia until October 1915. For that one year of Serbian Government and Parliament residing, many famous Serbian scientists (Jovan Cvijić, Alexander Belić, Jovan Banjanin, etc.) moved to Niš on the invitation of Premier Nikola Pašić. By its work they contributed the Yugoslav idea which was promoted at aggregation in the Building of Officers' Center on 6th May 1915. Writer Ivo Ćipiko was the president of the meeting. On this occasion was brought Yugoslav Declaration which is to be the base for future Krf's declaration (1917).

Niš was attacked by abdominal typhus epidemic which had been dominated that year in Serbia and divided into halves people. Serbian Government and Parliament abandoned Niš when they heard that Bulgaria had started war against Serbia (6th October 1915). Bulgarian armed forces occupied Niš on 23rd October 1915 and held it under siege until 12th October 1918 when Serbian armed forces entered under duke's Petar Bojović leadership. During Bulgarian ruling there broke out well-known Toplički insurrection on March 1917 in region of Prokuplje, Kuršumlija and Leskovac under the hegemony of Kosta Vojinović and Kosta Pećanac and rebels came even until Niš. Toplički insurrection, as the only one authentic movement of resistance in occupied Europe, was suppressed on November 1917, with great number of civil victims.

CREATING OF KINGDOM OF YUGOSLAVIA

From October till December 1918 defeated territories under Austria-Hungary (Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Vojvodina) declared themselves for becoming part of federative union with Kingdom of Serbia. On 1st December 1918 Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians was declared, and soon got name - Kingdom of Yugoslavia. According to the registration 1921, on 248666 square kilometers there were 11984919 inhabitants with more than two millions subjects of national minorities: Germans, Hungarians, Albanians, Slovaks, Romanians, Rosins, Poles, etc.

Like so many times before, Niš had to be built from foundations. Railway station and bigger factories in Niš were considerably destroyed, and trade manufacture and agriculture were retarded in similar way. Nevertheless, economic life in Niš got back in stage before the war already in 1919. Among first factories there was Foundry and mechanic workshop of Dragomir Pejić, Shoes Factory of Vlada Dimitrijević, and Electric Mill of Union Workshops from Niš. From 1919 till 1924 all bigger industrial firms had regenerated business and round twenty new firms started to work. According to first registration in Kingdom of Yugoslavia, in 1921 Niš had 25109 inhabitants, almost as much as in 1910; that shows how big sacrifice was that Niš and neighbors had been taken in two Balkans wars and in First World War.

Until 1919 the mayor was Petar Stanković, who had been on that function during the war too, and after him, on 5th January Sotir Zdravković came to this place. He was in the head of community when the first public elections had been declared, on 22th August 1920, but they were repeated on 24th October 1920, because of certain in corrections. The candidates of Communist Party took 24 from 36 places for members of a committee, and Pavle Stojković has been elected for the first town mayor in Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This government worked for a short time, till June 1921. State government dismissed local authorities in "red community" of Niš, and had declared new elections for 25th September 1921. Communist Party couldn't participate in these elections because new public work had been

forbidden by document "Declaration" and Democratic and Radical Parties divided government between themselves. In parliamentary life of Niš in 1923 there were two important persons that will make a sign in political life of Niš and Serbia in years after: Nikola Uzunović, in 1923 he was a public deputy and edifice minister in government of Kingdom of SCS, and Dragiša Cvetković – community mayor and later – prime minister of Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Until the beginning of Second World War, these two radicals from Niš will mark political scene of the city between two wars with their rivalry and promise that "Niš will be separated as administratively free town and won't pay so many taxes".

At that time, daily newspapers appears – "Progress", "New dawn", "Economy papers", "Messenger of Niš", and from November dramatic pieces "Zamfir's Zona" by Stevan Sremac and "Koštana" by Bora Stanković, took place in coffee-house "Russian emperor". Acting society "Maks Nardec" was established in 1923, and actors was inhabitants of Niš – Serbs and Jewish. Opera – houses from Sarajevo (1923 and 1925) and Subotica (1922 and 1924) acted as guests in our theatre. Labor Amateurish Society "Abrašević" started to work again in 1919, nourishing musical, vocal and scene art. Jews and Serbian singing society "David", ecclesiastical singing crew "Branko", catholic singing society "Star", railway society "Constantine", Russian choir "Cuban Kazaks" etc. started or continued to work. Dušan Janković and Vasilije Rudanovski, academic painters and educated artist of graphics, made their exhibitions in Niš.

The most discernible development of Niš had lasted from 1925 till 1930, when some of our economic giants made progress – especially Tobacco factory and Textile Factory "Mita Ristić & sons". In that time there were eleven banks in the city, but competition started to grow and it became hard to sell the goods. In time of economic crisis and augmentation of general dissatisfaction, Niš had 35465 inhabitants, but it was hard to find employment. Manufactures and agriculture, being in bad situation for a while, more obviously decay, and labor's demonstrations started to get more often. In whole Kingdom of Yugoslavia, at that time Niš had the biggest prices for goods and

the inhabitants are overburdened with high taxes. That create labor's movements, Communist party gets more and more members and the other parties act destructive so King Alexander I Karađorđević declares "Sixth January dictatorship", that forbids work to every political party.

The priest Bruno Lovrić published book "A history of Niš" in 1927 and it had influenced on further events in local history. The same year two more books, written by Živko Randelović, had been published – "Revolution in Toplica", and "Battle at Kamenica".

From 1929 till 1939 Niš had 40000 inhabitants, Serbs were in majority, but there were also Slovenians, Croatians, Jews, Gypsies, Greeks and Tzintzars. Especially since 1935 Niš was in a full swing, developing itself, so in the period from 1936 till 1941 there were 82 bakeries in private possession. In that period, Dragiša Cvetković is prime minister in Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In June 1937 Niš celebrated 60 years of Turks liberation and in that goal, it had been searched the idea for the monument in the center of the city. Antun Augustinčić's artistic work was accepted. The celebration took place on June 28th with many eminent guests, and also members of Committee for Liberation's heirs. Descendants of a priest Petar Ikononović, Kole Rašić and others set at first rows. Regent Pavle Karađorđević uncovered the monument.

Before that celebration, famous actor Raša Plaović built foundation of National theatre and State Trade Academy in 27th June 1937. Beside the uncovering monument as the most important part of the celebration, very important also was opening of a new aqueduct and that eradicated all infective diseases caused by filthy water. Consultations on building a modern surgery in Niš's hospital started at the same time. At the end of 1936 and beginning of 1937 there were 157 cultural and artistic societies.

On the competition, declared for the work about history of the city, writings "Monuments of Niš 1877-1937", by Mihailo Ristić, professor from Jagodina's teaching school, bought off. Another writer and city history research worker, journalist Mihailo Paligorić wrote

”Economic and cultural history of Niš” and that book beside Lovrić’s and Ristić’s books, had become source for the latter researches.

In September 1937, small opera – house in Niš was established and it had last till May 1939. Direction of National theatre in Moravska district set it aside. Founding of real opera - house was stopped by Second World War. In January 1939, Milorad Šapčanin piece ”Foundation” was played in new building of National theatre, finished in December 1938.

In the eve of Second World War, on 17th December 1939, the monument to king Alexander I Karađorđević was built on the square near today’s Law faculty. There were many guests during the uncovering of the monument. This monument, real master – piece among monumental edifices, was destroyed after liberation.

Defense from possible air attacks became more than necessary in time of German’s, Italian’s and neighbor countries’ militant politics. Because of that, first city air attack protection training was organized on 5th November 1933. Political situation in Europe intensified and the question of city defense had become important. Official paper of Moravska district declared a Decree about air attack defense on May 13th 1939. Factories, hospitals, schools, military units, railway stations and other public building were due to build bombing shelters.

Since autumn 1939 systematic turnings off of the power start, in order to simulate the defense of enemy airplane’s attacks, and on February 1940 emergency sirens were tested in particular time. Citizens of Yugoslavia, Serbia and Niš could be informed about constant bombing of London by newspapers and radio devices. They had not any suspect that Kingdom of Yugoslavia would be next victim of the great powers.

Public life becomes overburdened by appearance of supervening facism and nacism, and that creates more tensions. Regent duke Pavle Karađorđević travels to Germany, where in his honour Adolf Hitler organized a great military parade, in order to influence on decision about joining Tripple pact. Germany guaranteed complete independence and unchanged status in borders and inner regulation to Kingdom of Yugoslavia. After a former decision of royal

government and Royal Council, without any real alliance support, Dragisa Cvetković, vice president of Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Alexander Cincar – Marković, foreign – affair minister, signed a Protocol of joining Yugoslavia to Tripple pact in Vienna on 25th March 1941. British information agency initiated protest in Belgrade. Opening of this potential front in Balkans minimized the Germans pressure on England and gave time to british government to consolidate. Although England and London needed protest in Belgrade on 27th March 1941, Serbia haven't had that need at all.

We haven't waited to long for Hitler's revenge. Early in the morning on 6th April, 1941 German's airplains bombarded Belgrade, and on 8th April German's plains, taking off from neighbour Bulgaria, severely bombarded Niš. Battalions of 12th army, led by feldmarshall List entered Niš on 9th April. Half destroyed from German's aviation bombardment, with round 400 dead and 500 wounded people, Niš was quickly ocuppated.

FROM 1941–1990

Immediately after the City of Niš was conquered, in order to show serious intentions, the occupant arrested couple of dozens citizens of Niš, who were kept in Niš fortress for long time. They were released later that year. The raving robbery of Jewish merchants and all Jewish people took place in the city. By the order of Military Command for Serbia, on 28/4/1941, Feldkomandatura 809 – Niš was founded. It was central body of German direction for Southern Serbia. The head of this direction was Colonel Carl Freier Von Botmmer. This Feldkomandatura had unlimited entitlement according "clearance" of occupied zones with so called "second class citizens" – the Jewish and Gypsies. On June 7th 1941, the Feldkomandatura gave direction to all aerial chiefs, the Heads of town's superiors, chief of Niš Police to handle following lists till June 15th:

1) The lodge of freemasons; 2) The Jewish religious communities; 3) Synagogues; 4) All other Jewish organizations; 5) The leading persons amongst Jewish; 6) All Jewish stores (factories, companies) and 7) Other Jewish people.

The breaking moment in relation between the occupant towards the citizens of Niš and Serbia, was German aggression on the Soviet Union on 22/6/1941, what resulted in rebellion on July 7th. The Communist Party of Yugoslavia did rebellion in Serbia, so Feldkomandatura was in chance to make regime stricter in its occupation zone. The cause for this was event which happened on 03/08/1941, when Alexander Vojinović, the member of the Yugoslav Communist Party assassinated German officers and soldiers in the "Park" hotel by throwing hand-bomb into hall of the hotel.

Raged Germans on that and following nights arrested huge number of people, while Colonel Von Bottmer asked for instructions from Belgrade. In September 1941 building of concentration camp commenced, near "Red Cross" railway station. It was named by railway station – "Red Cross" concentration camp. In October 1941, people from surrounding places were settled in it. All Jewish from Niš and surrounding areas as well as Roms and supporters of National Liberation Movement and Ravna Gora Movement were arrested, but there were no physical liquidation of citizens. As revenge for anti-fascist units activity, the German occupation regime set the rule, which had been in power throughout Serbia – for one wounded German soldier - 50 Serbian people were executed and for one dead German – 100. Germans put this punishment in power during October 1941 in Kragujevac and Kraljevo, where more than 10000 people were executed. The end of Liberated Republic of Užice and mass executions in named cities made very unpleasant atmosphere for the Resistance Movement. In the concentration camp "Red Cross", more often were taken the Resistance Movement members, as well as in the other places in Serbia. There were no executions at the beginning of 1942. Even when news that execution of partisans (members of Kopaonik's Partizan Forces – 150 of them) was decided and their destiny became clear, people sentenced to death agreed flight, which was prevented by some imprisoned people, who reported their comrades. By the third try, when they realized that they had been betrayed once more, instead of going through the gate, 148 of them went through barbed wire leaded by Branko Bjegović, student. It was the first flight of imprisoned people from any concentration camp within the Third Reich. The final figure showed that 40 of them lost their lives on the wire, two informants were executed by Germans, 6 fugitives were found and returned to camp and 99 of them found their way towards freedom. Germans reacted quickly, so five days later, on 17/02/1942, mass execution by shooting took place on Bubanj. Thousand of prisoners were killed, mostly Jewish and communists. In the atmosphere of revenge, the Bulgarian occupant, who possessed 5 areas, did such inhuman barbarian acts, that Milan Nedić, Serbian prime-minister at that time, asked for protection of Serbs living in those areas.

Amongst occupants was even less understanding for any sort of "normal life". It is assumed that from February 1942 till October 1944 more than 30000 people passed through the gates of the concentration camp. Partisan forces around Niš were forced to retreat, especially from February 1942 till June 1943, when arrests of people, who were marked as partisan supporters, took place.

Aside the large number of communist organizations whose members were executed by shooting on Bubanj, additional difficulties were extremely low temperatures. During that period one more problem emerged – bombing by American and English forces in several occasions. All ally bombings (20/10/1943, 13/03/1944, 30/03/1944, 05/04/1944) took more citizens' lives than amongst occupant forces. All together, during the Second World War there were 57 destroying attacks of allies.

The Liberation Movement in Niš and surrounding areas got stronger, especially when allies succeeded on different fronts and Bulgarians moved onto allies' side. In period between May and October 1944, all preparations regarding military conquest of Niš were done. The City of Niš is one of the most important crossings on the Balkan Peninsula. After battles, which lasted for more days, the City of Niš was liberated by partisans, Soviet and Bulgarian forces on October 14th 1944.

It is worth to mention that Ravna Gora Movement, leaded by General Draža Mihailović, was very developed in Niš and surrounding areas during the occupation.

All what was regarded as industry in Niš was completely useless after liberation. The significant damage was seen on electricity reactor St. Paraskeva in Sicevo, National Theatre building, National Museum building, Hypo Bank (today main Post Office building) and lot of other. There was 20% destroyed houses and 29% citizens less in Niš in 1945 than before the war.

THE PROCESS OF RESTORATION

Parallel with the first steps in restoration of damaged economy, the new authority resolved problems of accommodation and further education of war orphans, as well as fight against tuberculosis. On the first elections for the Constitution Assembly on November 11th 1945, 91% of over-aged population in Niš voted. The list of National Front (the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and Josip Broz Tito) got 81.63% of all voters and the list holder for Niš, Koča Popović, man who liberated City of Niš, was the first Member of Parliament from the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. Those elections were remembered by "blind boxes", the full system of electoral theft, which was set by the new authority, in order to achieve as better results as possible.

Till May 1st 1946, the "severe" military courts were in charge. They processed lot of persons, who they assumed to made war-crimes.

After the process of nationalization from 1946 and 1948, the private sector remained only in skilled jobs and agriculture. Since 1950, seven private textile companies joined in the Industry for cotton procession "Ratko Pavlović", well-known as NITEX. The factory for leather and rubber products "Đuka Dinić" merged 10 private companies from the same branch. Apart from the above named organizations, Tobacco Factory Niš and Mechanical Industry Niš became symbols of Niš.

The Informbureau resolution (1948) forced Federal National Republic of Yugoslavia government to start relying on domestic sources, what included fast restoration of the economy. At the other hand, administrative way of governing was swapped with workers self-governing in 1950. Following institutions were renewed and put in motion in the period since 1955.

- Health: Military and civil Hospital, Mental Hospital in Gornja Toponica, Sanatorium in Knez Selo, Pasteur's Institute and Institute for work medicine.
- Cultural: National theatre, Children's Theatre, National library, National museum, Historical archive, The Symphony Orchestra of Niš, Film organization "Slavica" and People's post.

- Schools: large number of primary and secondary schools.
- Competitions in athletics, box, football, gymnastic, basketball, volleyball, chess... From the vast majority of sports Niš was giving state representatives in the oncoming period.

In the following decades, Niš is developing industry and agriculture. By the Constitution Act from 1963, 30 surrounding villages belonged to Niš Municipality, what should have resulted in strengthening of villages, agriculture and cattle-breeding.

The industrial production is getting stronger and stronger, during 1960s and 1970s, what resulted in foundation of the University of Niš. The first faculties at the University of Niš were Medicine, Law-Economy and Technical, which were under the University of Belgrade for the first five years. By foundation of the University of Niš in 1965, these faculties, along with newly founded Electronic and Philosophical, were re-settled under the University of Niš. Since 1971 Technical faculty was divided into Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Faculty of Civil Engineering, whilst from Faculty of Law-Economy emerged Faculty of Law and Faculty of Economy. So, at that time the University of Niš had 7 faculties all together. Till the end of 1970s, majority of faculties had post-graduate studies. Development of the University of Niš required additional institutions, so in 1967. The University Library was founded to meet the needs of professors and students of the University. Niš became one of the major educational centers in Yugoslavia, which had 127654 citizens in 1971.

In that period Niška Banja, famous thermal spa from Roman period, experienced boom in progress. Thermo-mineral water and mineral peloid were specific for Niška Banja. Healing had been done at the Institute for prevention, healing and rehabilitation of rheumatic and cardio-vascular diseases "Niška Banja". The institute possesses modern equipment for the non-invasive diagnostique, healing and rehabilitation of rheumatic and cardio-vascular diseases.

The cultural life wasn't behind, also. Since 1966 there is film festival organized every year, named "Meetings regarding films", The Yugoslav Chorus Festival from 1969 and Niš Music Festival (NIMUS) from 1974.

The literature magazine "Gradina" was renewed in 1966 and there was number of literature creators from Niš gathered around this project: Ljubisav Stojanović, Dimitrije Milenković, Saša Hadži Tančić, and Tihomir Nešić. Miodrag Petrović, and later Slaviša Nikolin Živković, Goran Stanković, Zoran Ćirić and many other. The majority of those writers was within founders of the Writers' Society of Niš. In 1990. The International Writers' Colony was established in Sićevo. Applied art artists were gathering in Sićevo George since 1964. The idea for that sort of event was initiated by Nadežda Petrovic in 1905, when artist for the first time gathered over there. In 1970 the Gallery of Modern Art was opened with more than 40 exhibitions per year onwards.

Between 1960 and 1990 the amateur cultural creativity developed in almost all of the cultural branches. The chorus singing, music life in general, drama and folklor sections where the biggest talent "seedlings" as it was case with the Literative Youth and Film's Youth of Niš. At the beginning of 1980s Niš became well-known at the music sky of Yugoslavia by music groups as "Wondering hearts", "Mamma rock", "The Galley", "The Kerberos", "Mr. Pinocchio", "Hazards" and "Trivalia".

Among solo-singers the highest achievement was reached by Šaban Bajramović, as one of ten leading jazz-voices in the world. The cult place in the city became "Musical Club 81". The academic-cultural group "Veljko Vlahović" became recognized by the chorus, under management of Radojica Milosavljević. At the same time Niš became famous by sport. The football club "Radnički" reached UEFA Cup semi-finals, the handball club "Železničar" used to win Championship and Cup of Yugoslavia many times and became the European Champion.

Martial arts clubs along with athletic and chess club "Železničar" gave huge number of representatives, who were highly rated at European and World Championships.

Approaching the end of 1980s deep misunderstandings occurred inside the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, what resulted in the interruption in economic relations between Serbia and Slovenia.

Albanian pressure on Serbian population at Kosovo and Metohija became every-day topic in public press in the SFRY. At the beginning of 1990, Slovenia and Croatia raised their voice for independence, what was supported by various foreign factors. Due to political situation the economy was suffering in Niš, especially Electronic and Mechanical Industry. When Berlin's wall fell, companies from Serbia lost large number of collaborators from the Eastern bloc. Due to the unrest in SFRY, smaller number of companies wanted to invest in Serbia.

MULTIPARTY LIFE

When the 14th Congress of CPY was unsuccessful in January 1990, the process of "decomposing" of Yugoslavia began. Multi-party assemblies of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia decided to separate from the SFRY. In September 1990 new Constitution act of Serbia was established and in December, Parliamentary elections were organized. The Socialist Party of Serbia, leaded by Slobodan Milošević, was supported by the majority of all voters. The Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) and The Democratic Party (DS) were parties which had been fighting against the communism in the following years.

On the first local elections, held in April 1992, SPS won. On April 27th 1992 Serbia and Montenegro formed Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). At the same time, civil war spread all over Bosnia and Herzegovina and it developed in real religious war. Large number of refugees from all over the former SFRY moved to Niš. The economic sanctions introduced by Security Council of United Nations on May 31st 1992, made every-day life in the third Yugoslavia so difficult. Niš became the centre of the County of Niš in 1992. 1993 was remembered as year when there was inflation, never mentioned in the modern world. The Yugoslav national currency devaluated by 313 million percent. Serbia hasn't recovered from sanctions for a long period. In August 1995, more than 500000 of Serbs were forced to leave Croatia in the action called "Storm", undertaken by Croatian Army. Refugees were accommodated in hotels "Park", "Niš" and "Sicevo" in Niš.

Presidents of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia signed agreement about interrupting of war activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in November 1995, in an American military base Day-

ton. In December 1995 new peace agreement was signed in Paris. War activities ended.

Following year, local elections took place and coalition "Zajedno" won. Due to electoral will being changed, the leaders of coalition "Zajedno" (Together), called citizens of Serbia on peaceful protests, which lasted from 17/11/1996 to 27/1/1997. The central place for protests was the main City's Liberation Square (today - The King's Milan Square). With that protests, City of Niš showed democratic example to all places throughout Serbia how to defend civil rights.

The activity of Rotary Club in Niš was re-established in 1996.

4/9/1998 – The first Consular Office outside Belgrade was opened (High Consulate of Greece in Niš).

The life in Niš those years was almost dead, because of political events in Serbia and Balkan Peninsula. Even though, City's institutions tried to cope with problems, which were making pressure on the City as a whole.

Soon after that the old potential battle-core, Kosovo and Metohija elapsed. Due to permanent instability, army and police forces were keeping things in order at Kosovo. At the beginning of 1999, the peace conferences were held in Rambouillet and Paris. FRY's refusal to sign offered document resulted in NATO's decision to bomb FRY without Security Council's permission. The bombing campaign lasted for more than 2 months and apart from Kosovo, places in Central and Southern Serbia were severely ruined. Couple of thousands of people lost their lives, the large number of houses, schools and bridges was destroyed. In the aircraft attacks NATO forces used uranium-based bombs and entire Serbia was "sprayed" by various-sized cluster-bombs. At the same time, all around Europe, demonstrations against bombing campaign were organized, sporadically and in lower volume.

The North-West zone of Niš (Industrial Zone), where Tobacco Factory Niš (the biggest tobacco factory in the Balkans) and "Yugopetrol" (with reserves in natural gas and oil) are situated, was damaged badly. Area called "Šljaka" suffered huge damage, as well. As bombing was taking more time and Yugoslav Army resistance was tough, bombing campaigns were more intensive and destroyable. At the end, after more than two months of resistance, FRY signed the

peace-agreement (Kumanovo agreement), which ended the war and opened the new heading in Serbian history. During NATO aggression on Serbia, more than 25 citizens of Niš lost their lives, as consequence from cluster-bombs.

The period from July 1999 till August 2000 was marked by series of demonstrations against actual regime and NATO presence on Kosovo.

The newly formed coalition – Movement for Democratic Serbia, merged into the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS) with one and only target – to win presidential elections, booked for September 2000. The earnest candidate against Slobodan Milošević on the president elections was dr Vojislav Koštunica, representative of DOS coalition.

Dr Kostunica and DOS won. Their win was void by the Republic Electoral Commission. That moves raged citizens.

In 2000, same as in 1996, citizens gathered on Liberation Square in Niš. Student organizations and students' movement "Resistance" were carriers of idea to move Slobodan Milošević from his position and real supporters of DOS. On October 5th 2000, citizens of Niš were the first who set off towards Belgrade, leaded by Mayor of the City Zoran Živković. After couple of days, Slobodan Milošević admitted defeat and congratulated to Dr Vojislav Koštunica. Vojislav Koštunica was new, and as we have seen, the last president of FRY.

In the last decade of 20th century large number of radio and TV stations appeared. Aside of the Radio Niš, branch of Radio Television of Serbia, many private radio stations appeared: Fast, City, Banker, Radio Petica, Radio Belle Amie, whilst TV stations which appeared were TV5+ (later on TV5 and TV Puls), Nais, Belle Amie, Banker, Art, GTV (later NTV), OTV, Nišava and many other. By variety of editorial conception, those radio and TV stations, with more or less success managed to keep up the spirit of the City of Niš.

During that period the Festival of old-city music "Niš autumn", where famous Serbian and Yugoslav singers took part, became regular event.

Changes in regime and government resulted in different understanding of culture and identity of Niš.

NIŠ IN XXI CENTURY

With dr Vojislav Kostunica's victory on September elections and with taking on local, republic and federal authority by the site of DOS coalition (Democratic Opposition of Serbia) there has been started a new phase in political history of Serbia. After Slobodan Milošević has been arrested and delivered to Hague in order to be judged for war crimes which should be convinced by The Hague Tribune in process of war crime trial, there happened a severe division in DOS and each day more and more frequent misunderstandings in relationship between Vojislav Koštunica, president of Social Republic of Serbia, and Zoran Đinđić, president of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. At the same time that was also a conflict between presidents of two parliamentary parties (DSS and DS) which have resulted with difficult collaboration of these parties' members in many counties in Serbia.

Beside many emissaries, Niš gave a federal minister of international affairs Zoran Živković who shall be on this function till March 2003. After the assassination over Zoran Đinđić, he has worked in state of emergency as prime minister of Serbia until January 2004. After the parliamentary elections that was carried out on December 2003 and after long consultations, Vojislav Koštunica had become a prime minister of Serbia.

Niš has been founding and entering the Euro region Sofia - Skopje - Niš, and as a birthplace of Constantine the Great it has been associating itself with towns which are anyhow connected to this person (Tirreme, Milan, Rome, York, Jerusalem, Istanbul) and from 2002 Niš has been celebrating town's Slava in honor of St. Emperor

Constantine and St. Helena (3rd June according to new calendar – Gregorian). During the Slava there have been organized many cultural manifestations, sport competitions and international symposium "Niš and Byzantium". Departments of American and French Cultural Center have been established in Niš, association "Dante Alighieri", and there have been also founded following associations: "Vuk's foundation" – Department in Niš and "Cyrillic".

A group of people were are in love with jazz music with Aleksandar Bata Anastasijević at the head of the group started to gather jazz music buffs. This group of people founded jazz festival "Nišvil". Thanks to these festival famous jazz musicians were playing in Niš. Music festival "Nisomnia" was organized as town's manifestation from 2003. By its conception it is very familiar to "Exit" which has been organized in Novi Sad. Organization of this festival had caused a great storm in public, but the musicians' quality and massive response of public justify all investments in this big project.

Serious conserving works of the Baptistry from first half of IV century founded in July 2000 on Mediana has begun as well as of the unchristian temple fence founded at the same location. Because of its importance these findings retrieve Niš in the center of world publics.

In this period choir of Students' Cultural Center, by direction of M. Sc. Suzana Kostić has performed "Carmina Burana" by Karl Orff and "Requiem" by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Milorad Veljković Špaja, musical educator for many years and real successor to M. Sc. Radojica Milosavljević in conducting the Choir of Students' Cultural Center, which has been for these years in real expansion, has died suddenly. In future period M.Sc. Suzana Kostić will dedicate herself to pedagogic work, delivering conductor's baton more often to M. Sc. Zoran Stanisavljević. There have been founded The Faculty of Nice Arts which should gather Faculty of Fine Arts, Faculty of Musical Art and Faculty of Theatrical Art. Niš author Zoran Ćirić 2002 gained prestige literary award from journal "NIN" for novel "Hobo" and at the same year "Gradina" began to be issued regularly in new visual form.

In October 2001 under the circumstances that are not completely defined, fire caught the Cathedral in honor to St. Trinity. According to the communiqué of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Niš and Radomir Gvozdenović, a fire burned out over the night and it was caused by candlesticks melting. Great number of worthy artists' works has been destroyed in fire. By donations of the inhabitants of Niš and believers from other countries and also from other religious groups the Cathedral's rebuilding has started in a short time and temple is in function today.

Besides the pre-election promises that new governmental authority gave in election campaign, it didn't succeed to solve accumulated problems in Electronic Industry and Mechanical Industry Niš so the problem of workers who had been more and more often dismissed wasn't solved neither a solution to a problem has found. Even though the problem of denationalization was one of the pre-election things that DOS should regulate by law, neither this especially interesting segment to the inhabitants of Niš is solved.

At the moment when Zoran Đinđić the president of Serbian Government had been killed, 12th March 2003, Serbia found itself in situation it hasn't been since 1903, when was killed the King Alexander Obrenović and Draga Mašin.

In situation of grown political tensions Zoran Živković will serve as acting prime minister of Serbia. In state of emergency that have been acclaimed by Serbian Government over thousand individuals, for whom it is thought that are in connection with the attempt, will be brought to an informational talk in action "Sablja".

In period when Zoran Živković was on function of premiere of Serbia, with great financial assistance of Norway Kingdom, in Niš was opened the airport "Constantine the Great" and same year (2003) Tobacco Factory Niš was bought by "Philip Morris". Above all this, there have been approved financial support for recording a movie "Zamfir's Zona" by Zdravko Šotra according to the similar work of Stevan Sremac. This movie, which music has been composed by Nenad Milosavljević "Galley"), will be seen by million auditorium from Serbia and overturn all record holder in viewing.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NIŠ (2004-2013)

In a tense situation after the assassination of Zoran Đinđić, the function of acting Serbian Prime Minister was appointed to one of the vice-presidents of the Democratic Party and Federal Internal Affairs Minister Zoran Živković, who held this position until December 28th 2003. Vojislav Koštunica became the Prime Minister of Government formed by parties DSS, NS, G17, SDA, and supported by SPS. This coalition came to power in Niš in the local elections, together with a landslide victory for the mayor candidate Smiljko Kostić of the New Serbia. He won election by 62, 6 percent of the votes.

Immediately after the elections, there has been an escalation of violence in Kosovo on March 17th 2004, which led to a growing tension that marked the policy of the Government of Serbia in this period. Niš is starting to lose its commercial and economic growth, so by the end of 2007 the number of unemployed and the laid-off workers increased. In the process of privatization of public companies, large number of workers were losing their jobs or living in intolerable conditions, so there were more frequent strikes of disgruntled people. Niš received a large number of refugees and fugitives from Kosovo and Metohija. What is characteristic of this period of the City Government is the fact that Niš is divided territorially and administratively to five Municipalities: Mediana, Pantelej, Palilula, Crveni krst and Niška Banja.

What marked the last few years of the City Government in that session was the issue of political rehabilitation of Dragiša Cvetković. Through science and art, activities of the last Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia were clarified. Writer Vidosav Petrović

published book "Dragiša Cvetković – by himself", in which many of Cvetković's speeches and articles were enclosed; then on May 2007 premiere of monodrama "Sleepless nights of Dragiša Cvetković" took place, directed and played by actor of Niš National Theatre, Aleksandar Mihailović. A few months later, the movie by director Miki Stamenković about Dragiša Cvetković was released. Posterior to Decision of the City Assembly, Božidara Adžije Street was renamed to Dragiša Cvetković Street, and after the Decision of the Panel of Judges of the District Court in Niš, on September 2009 this deserving citizen of Niš was posthumously rehabilitated.

At the national and local elections held on May 2008, Serbian Government was formed by a Coalition "For a European Serbia", consisting of DS, G17+, SPO, SPS-PUPS-United Serbia and national minority parties. Almost identical was the City Government, which was formed in Niš. Mayor Smiljko Kostić was replaced by Miloš Simonović (DS), while prof. Mile Ilić (SPS) was appointed to the position of the President of the City Assembly. These elections have, after twelve years, returned SPS in City Government.

On June 2008 Šaban Bajramović, the legendary singer, passed away. A year later (on May 5th, 2009) City Assembly issued a Decision by which the former Southern Boulevard was renamed to Boulevard of Šaban Bajramović. The monument to this famous artist, made by sculptor Vladan Ašanin, was set at the Quay beside Nišava River not far from the City Fortress, and it was donated by film director Goran Paskaljević, musician Goran Bregović, former Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Živković, theater director and Minister of Culture Nebojša Bradić, Mayor of Niš Miloš Simonović, actor, director and film producer Ljubiša Samardžić, organizer of the festival Rock Village Mirko Miljuš and singer Esma Redžepova. Minister of Culture Nebojša Bradić unveiled the monument on August 12th 2010, the opening day of Nišville Jazz Festival.

The geostrategic position of Niš induced establishing of the Regional Centre for Emergency Situations, jointly by Serbia and Russia. This Center became active during August 2010, with the primary task of dealing with natural disasters, larger fires and the like.

In the summer of 2009 the first edition of the novel "Constantine's Crossroads" by Dejan Stojiljković was published - a work that has received the Award of the Foundation Miloš Crnjanski in 2010, and by the middle of 2011 it have had another 17 editions and translations to many languages. During this period, a book "Edict of Milan" by Nebojša Ozimić was published and, by mid-2011, it came out in four editions. After nearly two decades of waiting, the Encyclopedia of Niš - Culture Tome was published, as well as another major publication of City of Niš – Lexicon of Niš.

Question of the marking the 1700 years of the Edict of Milan in 2013 was actualized in December 2009, when a group of businessmen led by Dragan Milošević, representatives of all political parties in Niš, representatives of the Gendarmerie and the Army of Serbia, with the blessing and support of the Bishop of Niš Irinej (Gavrilović) signed the Declaration of National Unity, intending further active work on the anniversary of the significant history date of mankind.

In April 2010 the Committee for Building a Complex of Emperor Constantine on Vinik Hill was formed, with Dragan Milošević as president. This body financed the third edition of the "Edict of Milan" by Nebojša Ozimić, and at the same time, the Center for Church Studies launched a series of monthly lectures, which would last until 2013. Later, at the invitation of the City of Niš, representatives of Arlo, Trier, Milan and York paid a visit, strengthening the cultural and economic relations between the towns of the so-called Network of Constantine.

After the death of Patriarch Pavle, at the election meeting for the 45th Patriarch of SPC on January 22nd 2010, the Bishop of Niš Irinej (Gavrilović) was elected, and enthroned in Peć on October 3rd the same year. His arrival at the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church hastened the question of Celebration of 1700 years of the Edict of Milan. At the session of the Holy Synod on 26th May 2011, dr Jovan (Purić), the former Vicar Bishop of Diocleia, was elected the Bishop of Niš. The very act of enthronement of Jovan Purić, the Bishop of Niš took place on August 7th 2011, in the presence of Patriarch Irinej and other bishops of SPC.

Dragan Milošević in 2012 received Award of Miša Anastasi-jević Foundation for the architectural design of the Complex of the Emperor Constantine, but the realization of this project, which was assumed it could have revived the Niš Region, never happened. The disagreement between the City of Niš and Diocese of Niš at first completely blocked the further implementation of the project, and then left it to oblivion.

In 2011, the original idea of building a Sports Arena "Constantine" for the European Handball Championship was abandoned, and enlarging of the existing Arena "Čair" took place instead. In September 2011 works on the Arena were completed and EHF delegation has accepted the object, so the European Handball Championship for men could began. According to the official report, the works on the Arena cost nearly 2,5 million Euros, which was a major investment. As the Arena was expanded for 500 seats, its capacity raised to 5000 visitors. Some time later, at the request of the International Tennis Federation, a further adaptation of the Arena made it suitable to indoor tennis standards also.

In this period, Niš sports audience won their battle: because of the hot atmosphere created at the international games, Volleyball Federation of Serbia and the Serbian Handball Federation requested important matches of Serbian national teams to be played in Niš. Initiative regarding Niš as a center of sporting events in the region was also joined by the Tennis Association of Serbia, and Arena hosted the Davis Cup match Serbia vs. Sweden. Thus, in 2012 citizens of Niš enjoyed in excellent sport events: European Handball Championship, the first round of the Davis Cup, Korać Basketball Cup, Volleyball World League, Fed Cup ...

At the same time, there arose the initiative to build a new city stadium, since the old one was in a critical condition. Due to age and the risk of collapse, in 1995 the use of the east and north stand was banned, and in 2008 the part of the south stand lost its use permit also. In March 2011 the east, north and south stand were completely brought down, and construction of three new stands was commenced on August 5th 2011. Overall investments of the Government of

Serbia and City of Niš amounted to about a billion Dinars. Newly built stadium has a capacity of 18500 spectators. The first game at the reconstructed stadium, although with still unfinished east stand, FC Radnički played on September 15th 2012 vs. FC Smederevo under new floodlights. In the coming year, FC Radnički would be positioned at the top of the First League, and stadium, after some time, was ready to accept a larger number of fans, so the tickets for the matches were mostly sold out.

Change of the City Government occurred after formation of the new Serbian Government due to the parliamentary elections, which were held on May 6th 2012. After two and a half months, Ivica Dačić was appointed a Prime Minister of the new Government, and Aleksandar Vučić a First Vice President. At the same time, in the presidential election Tomislav Nikolić (SNS) defeated Boris Tadić (DS), and soon after that the Democratic Party began with opposition activities. In City of Niš, Zoran Perišić, a cardiologist (SNS) assumed the position of Mayor, and prof. Mile Ilić (SPS) remained President of the City Assembly.

At the state level, preparations for the Celebration of 1700 years since the signing of the Edict of Milan were speeding up. The beginning of 2013 was marked by the Edict of Milan – on January 10th, the National Museum of Niš launched exhibition “Christianity in Niš through the Centuries” at the Synagogue Gallery, and on January 17th the official Celebration of the Edict of Milan started, with concert of Russian Choir of Sretenje Monastery at the National Theatre in Niš.

City Municipality Mediana joined the Celebration as they had built seventeen drinking fountains in the area of the City center. The means for the first fountain were donated by the Patriarch Irinej himself.

AGENDA OF EVENTS MARKING THE JUBILEE OF EDICT OF MILAN

Planned, organized and implemented in coordination with Council of the
Edict of Milan, Ministry of Culture and Information, Office of the Jubilee of
Edict of Milan / Office of Services of the Mayor of Niš

Datum	Mesto	Opis događaja
January 11 th		Award Ceremony of "11 th January", the highest award of the City of Niš.
January 17 th	National Theatre of Niš	Gala Concert of Sacred Music, by Choir of Sretenje Monastery of the Russian Federation.
January - March	National Museum of Niš; Synagogue Gallery	Exhibition "Christianity in Niš through Centuries", National Museum of Niš. Group exhibition of archaeologists, curators, historians, art historians and ethnologists of National Museum of Niš, displaying a rich tradition of Niš, seen through the prism of Christianity. Museum material covers the period from Early Christianity period to the present day. Copies of frescoes from the early Christian graves in Jagodin Mala are displayed. The exhibition is actually a cross-section of the rich Christian history of Niš, giving some insight into the forgotten customs and displays the ethnos of the city.
February 20 th	University of Niš	Ceremony of Scholarships "Constantine", Philip Morris and the City of Niš.
February 26 th – 27 th		Diocese of Niš - Jubilee Celebration of the Birth of Two Great Rulers of Our Region: • St. Simeon of Myrrh, February 26th - 08:00 h Holy Liturgy in the Church of St. Panteleimon in Niš; - 19:00 h Ceremonial Academy, Hall of the St. Sava Home. • Holy Emperor Constantine, February 27th - 08:00 h Holy Liturgy in the Church of St. Constantine and Helen in Niš.
February 27 th	National Theatre of Niš	Premiere of Theatre Play "Constantine".

February 28 th	Primary and secondary schools in Niš	"Public lecture on Constantine", Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of Republic of Serbia and School Administration of Niš.
March 1 st	St. Sava Home	Concert of Vocal Group "Constantine". Program comprises spiritual and folk music from these regions. Visiting guests - Belgrade Male Choir and Quartet Forte.
March 5 th	University of Niš	Lecture by Sir Paul Judge, Chairman of the British-Serbian Chamber of Commerce, British-Serbian Chamber of Commerce, University of Niš. Visit of Sir Paul Judge is significant because of the economic cooperation of Niš and Great Britain, and connecting of private entrepreneurs and businessmen. Visit is important for future cooperation that could be established in the field of economy, culture and education between the City of Niš and the cities of Great Britain. This lecture is just one of the events dedicated to the Jubilee of the Edict of Milan, since the Emperor Constantine had been inaugurated in York.
March 7 th – 25 th	Gallery Serbia	Exhibition of Tapestry Work of Zagorka Stojanović, "The Story of an Icon", Gallery of Contemporary Arts. Exhibition consists of 28 large-scale tapestries directly inspired by the Miraculous Icon of the Bogorodica Ahtirska.
March 22 nd	National Theatre of Niš	Symposium "The Development of Medicine from Constantine to the Present Day", Serbian Medical Society - Branch Niš. Značaj predavanja je da se učesnici upoznaju sa jednim Intention of the Symposium is to familiarize participants with history of medicine, ranging from the Roman Empire to the present, with emphasis on the possibilities of some areas of medicine in Niš.
March 23 rd	Stevan Sremac square, Niš	Event "Greetings to Spring", Office of Jubilee of Edict of Milan. 11:00 h to 13:00 h, Stevan Sremac square - Puppet Theater play, Art School Drama Section performance, musical performances by students of the Music School and media promotion of Calendar of Events for 2013.
April - May	Synagogue Gallery	Exhibition "Trace in Time", National Museum of Niš.

April 24 th	Symphony Orchestra Hall	Concert "Gratitude to Creator", Niš Symphony Orchestra.
May 14 th	Quay of Nišava	"III Humanitarian - Sportive Games without Frontiers - Roman Games", Humanitarian Society "Rukovet".
May 17 th	King Milan square, Niš	Prom parade "Dance of Tolerance", the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia.
May 17 th – 18 th	University of Niš	Conference "1700 years of the Edict of Milan", Faculty of Law, University of Niš.
May 18 th – 19 th	Sport Arena "Čair"	"18 th Folklore Festival of Serbs from Diaspora and Region", Students' Cultural Center Niš and Tourist Organization of Niš.
May 24 th – 25 th	University of Niš	International Scientific Conference "Dialogue of Cultures and Partnership of Civilizations in the Balkans - the Way of Peace, Cooperation and Democratic Integration", Faculty of Philosophy in Niš, Center for Research of Serbian Academy of Science and Art and University of Niš.
May 25 th - June 5 th	Salon 77	"Contemporaneousness - Variable Geography", Gallery of Contemporary Art.
May 30 th – June 21 st	Pavilion in the Fortress	Exhibition "Encounters" - works from the Art Colonies Mileševa, Sopot Visions and Helen of Anjou, Gallery of Contemporary Art.
May 31 st - June 2 nd	University of Niš	International Scientific Conference "St. Constantine and Christianity", Center for Church Studies Niš, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš.
May 31 st - June 6 th		Constantine's Days (Patron Saint of the City of Niš, St. Constantine and Helen), Tourist Organization of Niš.
May – October	Synagogue Gallery	Exhibition "Late Roman Necropolis in Jagodin Mala", National Museum of Niš.
June 3 rd – 7 th	University of Niš	XII International Scientific Conference of Byzantologists "Niš and Byzantium", the City of Niš, University of Niš, Diocese of Niš.

June 3 rd	Fortress of Niš	Musical Spectacle "Constantinus Magnus" by author and composer Aleksandar Sanja Ilić. With participation of Symphony Orchestra, Large Mixed Choir, vocal and instrumental soloists and ballet from home and abroad.
June 6 th – 19 th	Salon 77	Exhibition "Parchment of Serbia - Lamb of God", Gallery of Contemporary Art.
June 11 th – July 1 st	Pavilion in the Fortress	Exhibition "Twelve Artists on Edict," Gallery of Contemporary Art.
June 15 th	Fortress of Niš	"Beethoven's IX Symphony", Concert performed by the Symphony Orchestra of Niš.
June 23 rd – 26 th	St. Sava Home, Plateau in front of the Church of St. Constantine and Helen	Festival of Sacred Music "Music Edict," Church Choral Society "Branko", Church Parish of Niš and Diocese of Niš.
June 28 th	Fortress of Niš	Opera "the Troubadour" by Giuseppe Verdi performed by the Belgrade Opera.
PLANNED EVENTS:		
August		Screening of the documentary film about Constantine.
August 5 th – 10 th		International Colony of Animated Films for Children and Youth "Constantine 2013 - Pantelej".
August 10 th – 11 th		International Animated Film Festival for Children and Youth "Constantine's Gold Coin".
August 15 th – 18 th		International Jazz Festival "Nišville" 2013.
August		Wine Festival.
August		Niš Film Festival 2013.
September		Presentation of project "Meet Constantine", First Senior High School of Niš "Stevan Sremac".
September 3 rd – 30 th	Gallery Serbia	Exhibition of Vlada Veličković, Gallery of Contemporary Art.

September 14 th	Fortress of Niš	”Music of the City of Constantine”, a Concert of Byzantine music by Slobodan Trkulja
September 14 th		Dedication, sacral rites in the Parish Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross in Niš (Consecration of the Church).
September 19 th	The Gallery ”Philip Morris”	Exhibition ”Constantine and the Edict of Milan 313 - the Birth of Christianity in the Roman Provinces in the Territory of Serbia”.
September 20 th – 21 st		Eucharist, Cardinal Angelo Scola - the Archbishop of Milan
September		Congress of European Knights of Wine, British - Serbian Chamber of Commerce, Lisa Brown
October 3 rd – 28 th	Gallery Serbia	Multimedia Exhibition by prof. Čedomir Vasić, Gallery of Contemporary Art.
October 6 th		Central Celebration of the Edict of Milan - Serbian Orthodox Church
October	Synagogue Gallery	Exhibition of Icons ”Hymn to Eternal”, National Museum of Niš.
October 28 th		Closing Ceremony of the Celebration of the Edict of Milan.
November		Book Fair dedicated to the Jubilee of the Edict of Milan, NKC
November - December		Visiting Exhibition ”Good Light - Antique Lanterns”, Museum of Belgrade.
December 4 th		Group Exhibition of paintings of professors of Faculty of Arts in Niš.

CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

4000–3000 BC – Pre-history findings from Neolithic Period, early Metal Age, on locality Bujanj and Humska Čuka hill etc. discover the population of Niš even in that time.

2000 BC – The larger number of founded pre-history settlements in immediate surroundings of current Niš (Bujanj, Hum, Donja and Gornja Vrežina, Trupale, Gornja Toponica).

8 BC – Region of Niš is borderline between the Illyrians and Thracians.

3 BC – The Celts defeated the Illyrians, conquered all regions and gave to Niš constant name Naissus (Fair town).

75 BC – Romans conquer region of Niš in period of Dardanium war.

161 AC – Niš was mentioned for the first time in geography by Claudius Ptolemy as one of the four the biggest town in Dardanium.

2nd century – Naissus is the important Roman military lodge – municipality.

280 AC – Roman emperor Flavius Valerius Constantinus was born in Niš (St. Czar Constantine).

306 AD – Marcus Flavius Valerius Constantinus was proclaimed for Roman emperor (Constantine the Great).

4th century – Antic Niš, with Constantine's residence on Mediana, is at climax of its development as Roman military and Administrative center.

441 AD – Niš was ruined in Huns' invasion over The Balkans, in which are ruined and many another towns.

1185 AD – Serbian prefect Stefan Nemanja have been taking Niš.

1189 AD – Stefan Nemanja and German emperor Frederic I Barbarossa have met each other in Niš and have arranged collective struggle against Byzantium.

1386 AD – The Turks have occupied Niš for the first time (blockade has lasted for 25 days).

1428 AD – Niš was under continuous Turkey authority until liberation 1878.

1443 AD – Great battle near Niš. Erdelj duke Janko Hunjadi and Serbian despot Đurađ Branković defeated Turks. Niš was free for one year.

1570 AD – In Germany diplomat Rimea's itinerary Dubrovnik colony in Niš was mentioned.

1720 AD – Islam Aga's mosque was built in the center of Niš in current Boulevard of General Lešjanin. It is the only one fully preserved mosque in Niš, which has been under low defense since 1954. There are relics of two more mosques in Niš - Hasan - Begović mosque in Beograd – mala from Šumatovačka Boulevard and in Fortress of Niš Bali - Begović mosque which has been famous today as Show-room 77.

1723 AD – Built on Fortress of Niš which is considered to be the most beautiful and the most preserved Turkey edifice on the Balkans.

1737 AD – Second Austrian conquest of Niš. Occupation lasted for 85 days.

1766 AD – Metropolitan Raven published first book "Sindelija".

1814 AD – Most likely built church St. Archangel (the minor Cathedral, old church) in a place of old church burned in 1813. Church was digged in ground.

1872 AD – Construction of the Niš Cathedral dedicated to the Pentecost was finished. The construction the Cathedral began on October 1856, and the church was consecrated upon the liberation

from the Turks on February 1878. The Cathedral iconostasis was made by Stevan Todorović, Milutin Marković and the most important among them Đorđe Krstić. The church with worthy iconostasis was destroyed completely in disastrous fire on October 2001. Adapted and reconstructed church was consecrated again in 2006.

1809 AD – The first rebel struggles near Niš, organized against the Turks.

31. 5. 1809 AD – Battle on Čegar Hill. Leader of Serbian army was Duke Stevan Sinić from Resava. The Turks assembled a tower of the skulls of dead Serbs. It represents today unique monument in the world.

1835 AD – At the beginning of January Miloje Jovanović from Kamenica village near Niš, organized a rebellion against the Turks (Milojev's uprising).

1841 AD – One more rebellion against the Turks under leadership of Miloje Jovanović, trader from Kamenica village (so called Niš uprising).

24. 02. 1874 AD – During Turkey slavery there was formed a conspirator confidential liberating organization by site of well-known people under the leadership of Nikola Kola Rašić. The aim of organization was to make the arrangements for the liberation of Niš.

10. 1. 1878 AD – Niš was liberated from the Turks reign and practically after five centuries of slavery, affiliated to mother Serbia.

1878 AD – Upon the liberation of Niš from the Turks, the mosque, which were raised by Turks on the foundation of an old orthodox temple in Palilula, was again ADopted to the needs of the Orthodox religion, this time as the Church of St. Nicholas and consecrated at religious service.

1878 AD – Built and consecrated church of St. Panteleimon just after the liberation from the Turks. In the surrounding of current church there are foundation's relics of medieval church built in XII century by Stefan Nemanja.

1878 AD – Niš regulated itself significantly according to Vinter's "Project for The Regulation of Town Niš". The first High School in Niš started to practice.

1881 AD – Niš received first banking institution.

1882 AD – Teacher- training school started to practice.

1884 AD – Railroad track Belgrade - Niš was put into operation. There was established first number of newspaper "The Niš announcer" (first printed newspaper in Niš).

1884 AD – There had been established railroad factory which afterward became first and the largest company in town. Presently it is Holding company "Mechanic industry Niš" - MIN Niš.

1886 AD – Established Brewery by Jovan Apel.

1886 AD – There was Adopted The Act of King's Serbian Academy Foundation.

1886 AD – Established work shop for cotton manufacture today Niš Textile Industry "NITEX".

1887 AD – Established first theater in Niš - "Sindelić". It gained a status of national theater in 1931.

1887 AD – Established Ecclesiastical-choral group "Branko" which has been present and work in continuity till these days.

1887 AD – Raised Roman - Catholic church in Niš on land that was bought during the Turks reign. In 1925 church was recovered, extended, and belfry was added. In the middle of ninetieth year in XX century it was again extended and recovered.

1889 AD – National library was opened and built on the District Government Palace (named Banovina).

1892 AD – There was established first and the only one Niš Masonic lodge "Nemanja".

1894 AD – High school for girls started to practice.

1897 AD – There was shown first movie in Niš.

1898 AD –First painting exhibition was organized in Niš in July.

1900 AD – Begins establishing of literarily journal "Gradina".

1900 AD – The Pasteur Institute was established, first medicine preventive - exploratory institution of that kind in the World and on The Balkans.

1903 AD – Worker's Cultural Artistic Association was established.

1905 AD – Art Colony Sićevo, established by Nadežda Petrović, started to practice.

1906 AD – First overhead cinema under the tent started to work on Sindelić square.

1908 AD – First hydroelectric power station named "St. Paraskeva of Ivirion" was built on the River Nišava near Ostrovica village in the Sićevo Gorge.

1909 AD – Niš received open electric illumination.

1912 AD – The Command of Serbian aviation with its main office in Niš was established. First military airport in Serbia located on Trupale Field, not far away from Niš.

1914 AD – Niš became the residence of Serbian Government and National Parliament, Serbian war metropolis.

7. 12. 1914 AD – National Parliament of Serbia brought Niš Declaration which consists itself the explanation of the war of liberation aims and uniting of all the South Slavs in one commonwealth. This document will served as model for Krf's Declaration which has been substratum for Kingdom of Yugoslavia formation.

1915 – 1918 AD – Niš was under Germany - Bulgaria occupation in the First World War.

12. 10. 1918 AD – Niš was free from the occupiers.

1925 AD – The construction of Jews' place of worship - Synagogue was fiNišed at place of the old burnt Synagogue. Today building of Synagogue has been changed in exhibit hall of National Museum in Niš.

1929 AD – Unveiled monument on British Commonwealth War Cemetery from the First World War with 41 commemorative plaque in Niš settlement Delijski Vis.

1930 AD – Public transportation in town was formed by introducing streetcar traffic in Niš on line main Railway station – Niška Banja. Streetcars were thrown out the traffic in August 1958 and changed with bus transportation in town.

1933 AD – National Museum was published. Today it possesses in its depot about 40000 objects of priceless historic value.

1. 5. 1936 AD – Establishing of civil airway traffic.

27. 6. 1937 AD – Niš got new water supply which would in great measure decrease number of contagious diseases.

1936 AD – First Rotary Club in Niš was established.

27. 6. 1937 AD – There was placed cornerstone to the current building of National theater.

28. 6. 1937 AD – The Monument to the liberators of Niš was made and consecrated in the center of the city. The monument was made according to ideological solution of Antun Augustinčić.

27. 6. 1937 AD – Published book Caress Instep "Memorial of Niš 1877 – 1937" by Milovan Ristić.

17. 12. 1939 AD – Raised monument to Alexander I Karadorđević on the square not far from the building of current Law Faculty. The monument survived Germany - Bulgarian occupation, Anglo - American aerial pounding and struggles for the liberation in The Second World War. It was ruined in 1945 by members of Communistic National Liberation Board. The relics of monument were destroyed. It was built and consecrated at same place in 2005.

08. 04. 1941 AD – Germany military air forces pounded Niš.

09. 04. 1941 AD – Germans occupied Niš. They opened the Concentration Camp "Red Cross". Several thousands people were brutally executed in the Bujanj Hill.

12. 2. 1942 AD – There was organized an efficient large escape from the Concentration Camp "Red Cross", first of that kind in enslaved Europe.

14. 10. 1944 AD – Niš was liberated from Germans.

18. 10. 1944 AD – There was established first number of "country list", precursor of current daily list "country newspaper".

21. 02. 1945 AD – There was established Radio Niš which has been today a part of national radio network. Its broadcast has been heard across intermediate radio waves in great part of The Balkans.

1948 AD – Historic Archive was established.

1948 AD – There was established enterprise "RR College", precursor of current "Electronic Industry" Niš.

1958 AD – There was established Puppet Theater.

1960 AD – There was formed the Symphony Orchestra. It is the only one of that kind south from Belgrade.

1960 AD – There was established three faculties in Niš – Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Law-Economic, and Technical Faculty.

1963 AD – There was open monument on Bujanj Hill, work of the sculptor Ivan Sabolić from Zagreb City.

1965 AD – Niš became university town. University in Niš today consists of 13 faculties.

1966 AD – There was organized Film festival. It is the Festival of Yugoslav played movies achievements.

1969 AD – The Yugoslav Chorus Festival was organized.

June 1970 AD – The Gallery of Modern Art was opened.

1971 AD – Weekly newspaper "Narodne Novine" became first daily newspaper in Niš and south from Belgrade.

1974 AD – There was kept the first Niš Musician ceremony (NIMUS).

1975 AD – Niš became the center of Niš Region.

1983 AD – There was organized Niš jazz festival - NIŠVIL.

1986 AD – There was finished the construction and opened new port building of Niš Civil Airport in October.

1990 AD – There was organized Literary Colony in Sićevo.

1992 AD – Niš became the center of Niš District.

17. 11. 1996 – 27. 1. 1997 AD – After second round of election and due to electoral will being changed a great national movement began in Niš. It lasted for 100 days, till national will was not respected. On St. Sava's Day – 27. 1. 1997 there was constituted the First Democratic Congregation after the Second World War.

1997 AD – There was formed Association of Niš writers.

1998 AD – There was organized town's religious procession for the first time after the Second World War. The religious procession was on the occasion of the Pentecost, the Cathedral's of Niš Slava.

4. 9. 1998 AD – The first Consular Office in history of Serbia outside Belgrade was opened (High Consulate of Greece in Niš).

March–June 1999 AD – The aircraft attack of Serbia by NATO alliance. During NATO aggression on Serbia, more than 25 citizens lost their lives.

2000 AD – Built and consecrated Memorial - chapel dedicated to killed inhabitants of Niš during NATO aggression in 1999.

September–October 2000 AD – After the persuasive conquest of dr Vojislav Koštunica on the president elections and renunciation of election's results, after lasting several days demonstrations, citizens of Serbia started to move toward Belgrade from all directions. Citizens of Niš were again the first who set off towards Belgrade.

October 2001 AD – Under the insufficient circumstances the Cathedral dedicated to the Holy Trinity was burned in fire. It was renewed and consecrated in 2006.

November 2002 AD – Niš writer Zoran Ćirić gained prestige award of journal's "NIN" censure for his novel "Hobo".

2003 AD – The airport "Constantine the Great" was opened.

2004/05 AD – By the side of individuals and with the assistance of the Assembly of citizens "Aged Inhabitants of Niš" and "Old Niš" at municipal authorities there was given the initiative that Niš should receive new museum exhibits - aircraft and railroad museum anthology.

